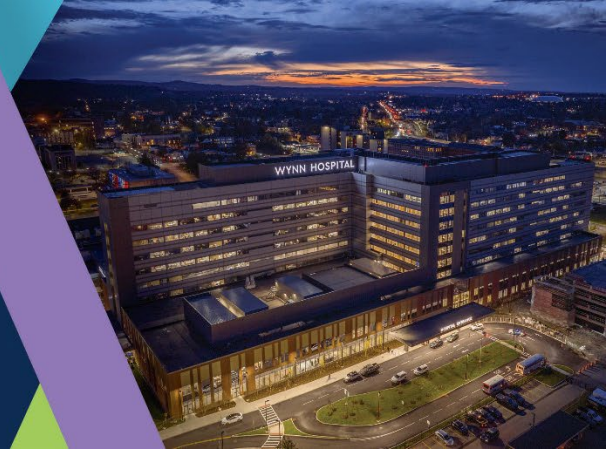


Just the Facts

MVHS & WYNN HOSPITAL

There's so much happening in healthcare in our region – at times it's hard to stay updated! That's why Just the Facts is being reinvigorated. This weekly publication, published on Tuesdays, will provide you with the latest information about MVHS and the Wynn Hospital!



TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025:

Spotlight: Audiology and Speech Therapy

National Speech-Language-Hearing Month is celebrated in May, so this week we are learning more about the Audiology and Speech Therapy departments at MVHS.

Audiology

An audiologist is a healthcare professional who diagnoses, manages and treats hearing and balance disorders, as well as tinnitus (persistent ear ringing). They work with individuals of all ages, from newborns to older adults, to address a range of auditory and vestibular problems at the outpatient campus at Faxton.

The audiologist provides hearing tests, vestibular testing, infant hearing screening follow up, hearing aid assessments and assistive listening devices.

Our two audiologists have a wealth of knowledge related to their scope of practice including the management and impact of client individual needs, barriers and impact of insurance reimbursement.

- Dr. Christine Hoage, CCC-A, has been with MVHS for 36 years in August.
- Dr. Cheryl Longwell-Townsend, F-AAA, has been with MVHS for 28 years.

Speech Therapy

A speech language pathologist (SLP) assesses, diagnoses and treats communication and swallowing disorders, including problems with speech sounds, language and fluency. These professionals work across all settings, including hospital, outpatient and rehab. They work with individuals of all ages, from preterm infants through end of life.

Upon graduation from an accredited program, students must complete a Clinical Fellowship (CF) year. The CF involves a mentored professional experience that begins after the completion of academic coursework and clinical practicum. A CF must work at least 36 weeks and 1,260 hours to meet the ASHA CF experience requirement under a certified mentor.

Currently, we have two Speech clinical fellows who joined our organization nine months ago: Maxwell Cherioli and Cailin Ruoti. During their time at MVHS, they were mentored by Speech therapists across all settings, with Tamara Casella, supervisor, leading the way as mentor!

These two candidates recently completed their Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology and are now able to sign as CCC-SLP professionals.

Maxwell and Cailin both chose to stay with MVHS with Tamara as their mentor to provide them with this experience and credentialing. They also both chose to relocate to the Mohawk Valley – Maxwell relocated from Michigan and Cailin from New Jersey. They have flourished under the training from Tamara and her team and have grown to love the department and facility.

In addition to Maxwell and Cailin, the Speech Therapy team includes:

- Tamara Casella, Rehab Therapy supervisor, who just celebrated her 20-year anniversary and completed her CF year at MVHS.
- Danielle Furlong, NICU specialist, NOMAS certification, completed her CF year at MVHS and has been with MVHS 18 years.
- Briana Chesebro, relocated from Tennessee, and has been with MVHS for three years.
- Eva Slusher, relocated from South Carolina, completed her CF year at MVHS and has been with MVHS for two years.

The Speech Pathologists at MVHS work at the Wynn Hospital, the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit at the Center for Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services (CRCCS) and with outpatients at the Faxon Campus.



From left to right: Maria Santa-Maria, Tamara Casella, Maxwell Cheroli, Cheryl Longwell- Townsend, Christine Hoage, Cailin Ruoti, Eva Slusher, Brianna Chesebro, Danielle Furlong and Amanda Straney.

Team Member Spotlight

To shine a spotlight on our MVHS Audiology and Speech Pathology departments, we caught up with two team members to get a better understanding of what they do and why they were interested in careers in Audiology and Speech Pathology. Their videos will be available soon on the MVHS [YouTube](#) and social media pages, so stay tuned!



Christine Hoage, AUD
Audiologist, Faxon Campus

How long have you been with MVHS?

"I've been with Mohawk Valley Health System for 36 years in August."

What inspired you to become a doctor of Audiology?

My brother was born with a cleft palate and had to go for speech therapy a lot when he was a kid. When he came out of

his therapy sessions, he was always showing me all the fun things he did and all the fun things he made, and I thought, *I want to be the one to do that!* But when I got to school I decided I did not have the creative talent for speech, and I was more interested in the Audiology side instead.

What kind of patients do you see?

The youngest that I've seen is two days old; the oldest that I've seen is 103. It's a big range."



Cailin Ruoti, Speech Language Pathologist

"A typical day for a speech pathologist at the Wynn Hospital starts with triage. My coworkers and I try to determine who our priorities are, typically our NPO patients. From there we try to complete as many bedside swallow evaluations as we can. We

schedule and complete our videofluoroscopy swallow studies with our inpatients and our outpatients.

The thing that I most look forward to when coming to work every day is the possibility of making a meaningful impact in someone's life. We're seeing patients in a lot of very vulnerable parts of their lives – something really traumatic might have just happened to them, whether it's a stroke, a traumatic brain injury, a new diagnosis of cancer – so being able to go in and do something as simple as give them their first sip of water or help them create their first sentence after not being able to talk for a while, is so impactful for me and being able to be a part of that journey, be that comforting presence, is so rewarding."

