



Putney Community Cares

Community Nurse Feasibility Report for Putney, VT

February 2024

Presented To:
Putney Community Cares

Presented By:
Lorraine Kane, Susan Mello, Ruby McAdoo



Putney Community Cares

The mission of Putney Community Cares is to foster the health, wellbeing and independence of all members of our community, from newborns to our oldest adults, by strengthening family and community bonds. We serve individuals, families, and older adults in our community. We provide outreach, direct support, programming and connection to services.

Putney Community Cares is dedicated to building and maintaining a vital, healthy Putney community.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
What is a Community Nurse?	3
Review of Feasibility Study	5
Feasibility Study Results	7
Logistics and Technical Considerations	9
Operational Feasibility	11
Financial Feasibility	12
Launching Community Nurse Program	13
Overall Takeaways	16



The Team



Lorraine Kane

Nurse

Raine worked for decades at a certified nurse midwife in Brattleboro, VT. She now works as a nurse substitute in the local school district. Putney Community Cares consulted with Raine to help with this report.



Susan Mello

Putney Community Cares Board Member & Nurse

Susan is a nurse at Brattleboro Union High School and has been a registered nurse in the region for decades. Susan serves on the board of Putney Community Cares and brings her years of experience as a nurse to the study.



Ruby McAdoo

Coordinator, Putney Community Cares

Ruby coordinates programs and initiatives for Putney Community Cares. She lives in a multi-generational household with her mother, husband and children and is acutely aware of the need for community nurse support.



Executive Summary

What is the need for a Community Nurse Program?

Putney Community Cares, Inc. (PCCI) serves the greater Putney community. According to 2020 Census data, 20% of Putney residents are over 60 years of age, almost all of which are living alone. Of those residents over 60, approximately 24% experience poverty. Particularly in rural communities, there is renewed interest in establishing a permanent Community Nurse Program. The State of Vermont is recognizing the needs of their aging population along with the health care needs of Vermont's residents in general. Besides identifying healthcare needs for individuals while in their home, the State of Vermont aims to provide funding to initiate creation of Community Nursing Programs throughout as much of Vermont as possible.

As this report highlights, there is community interest and support for PCCI re-establishing a Community Nurse Program (CNP). The timing is good for PCCI as there is financial support from the Community Nurse Connection. While the State of Vermont has encouraged communities to establish a CNP, there is currently no State funding. House Bill 358 will be considered during the legislative session of 2024. The bill does include money to municipalities for a CPN, but it is unclear how this will be distributed. The Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living have just published a Healthy Aging Plan. Within this 65-page plan, there is no mention of implementing Community Nurse Programs to achieve many of the goals laid out in the plan.

Moving forward, the data of the recent survey supports the Board of PCCI's decision to explore re-establishing the Community Nurse Program (CNP). This Feasibility Study aims to provide data supporting the implementation of a strong and sustainable Community Nurse Program.

What is a Community Nurse?

A community nurse (CN) is a Registered Nurse (RN) who provides a level of nursing care to individuals and families in their home to address healthcare issues. The focus of the community nurse is on home visiting, teaching, coaching, and integration of services as well as prevention of disease and promotion of health for individuals and the community. The ultimate goal is to provide care which will help allow a client to remain in their home safely. An additional goal is to decrease an individual's need to require care at the Emergency Department, Urgent Care or a hospital admission.

The community nurse is an independent position. They work with Putney Community Cares (PCCI) along with the primary care providers of clients, town officials and other involved organizations as needed. The CN will be providing direct home care visits in most cases and making assessments for Putney residents who are not eligible for visiting nurse services or other similar insurance covered programs. Clients are not charged for the care provided by the CN. This position does not take the place of visiting nursing services covered by insurance. The CN shares the same vision as PCCI in providing support, guidance and communication with a primary care practitioner or a family or community member to assist the individual to remain in the safe environment of their home.





Description of a Community Nurse

- A Community Nurse provides nursing care delivered in the home that focuses on health and illness care for individuals and families in our community.
- The goal of the Community Nurse is to provide treatment and education to decrease the occurrence of disease and illness and to promote healthy living.
- This service is for people of all ages who need health care assistance at home.
- This does not replace organizations such as the Vermont Visiting Nurses, Public Health Nursing, a Physical Therapist or an Occupational Therapist that would provide more in depth care and collaboration with doctors, hospitals and community health care organizations.
- The Community Nurse could act as a liaison between these groups, as well as be helpful in health promotion, guidance and health maintenance of Putney residents.
- Blood pressure or other health clinics could also be a part of this program depending on our community needs.
- The Community Nurse could be helpful with questions or concerns that a person might have prior to a doctor's appointment.
- A Community Nurse does not implement a doctor's orders, but can help to assess what support an individual might need.

Review of Feasibility Study

How was the study launched?

The mission of Putney Community Cares is to foster the health, wellbeing and independence of all members of our community, from newborns to the oldest adults, by strengthening family and community bonds.

In 2023, the Board of PCCI recognized a greater community need for providing care to its residents with one goal being the creation of a stronger and healthy community. The Board wanted to address the issues of food insecurities, lack of healthcare services and to increase opportunities for community exercise programs such as yoga, bone-strengthening and tai chi. The board felt a community nurse (CN) could be a critically important piece in helping to provide Putney residents with support in connecting to services and ensuring a safe environment in the home. The board began the process of considering what the need for a Community Nurse Program (CNP) might be and sought grants for the feasibility stage.

A Community Resilience grant from the United Way of Windham County was awarded to PCCI in March 2023 to conduct a Community Nurse Feasibility Study and produce a report. A small committee formed to create a survey for Putney residents to assess interest and needs. The survey consisting of 16 questions and was launched in April 2023 through various social media outlets and hard copies throughout the Putney community.

Who was the Audience Surveyed?

The survey was launched with the intention to reach as many Putney residents as possible with a range of ages. Twenty-one responses were received with the greatest number being the older population in town. However, the survey succeeded in identifying community interests and needs with strong support to begin a CNP.

Consulting Organizations

As the survey results have come in with an indication that a CNP would benefit the community, PCCI reached out to the following organizations to discuss and explore next steps:

1. Community Nurse Connection Board
2. Brattleboro Community Health Team
3. Westminster Cares
4. Guilford Cares



Previous Community Based Health Programs in Putney: History of Providing Medical/Nursing Care Through Putney Cares and Putney Family Services

The history of providing services for community members of all ages goes back many years in Putney. The origins of Putney Community Cares include the merger of two organizations in 2018, Putney Family Services and Putney Cares. Historically, Putney Family Services, found themselves providing guidance to Putney residents, with inadequate health care or no healthcare insurance, on how to obtain needed medical care. At the time (and now) the Putney Medical Office was a great resource and worked with many seeking care. However, some individuals would wait until their medical condition was serious which would leave them no option but to receive care through an emergency room visit. In the early 1990's, free healthcare clinics sprouted up throughout Vermont, and Putney Family Services took action. The Putney Free Clinic opened its doors in November of 1991 using the Putney Medical Office for its clinic space for 25 years. The clinic provided essential care for many and worked to enroll eligible individuals in a health care insurance plan. Today, Vermont Health Connect is the state's health insurance plan with a goal that all residents of Vermont have health insurance.

Around the region, several towns with Cares organizations (which serve an older population) have operated Community Nurse Programs. In the past and for a short time, Putney Cares offered a Community Nurse Program to Putney residents. Today, there is still a foot care clinic run by a nurse, but no other nurse programs are available.

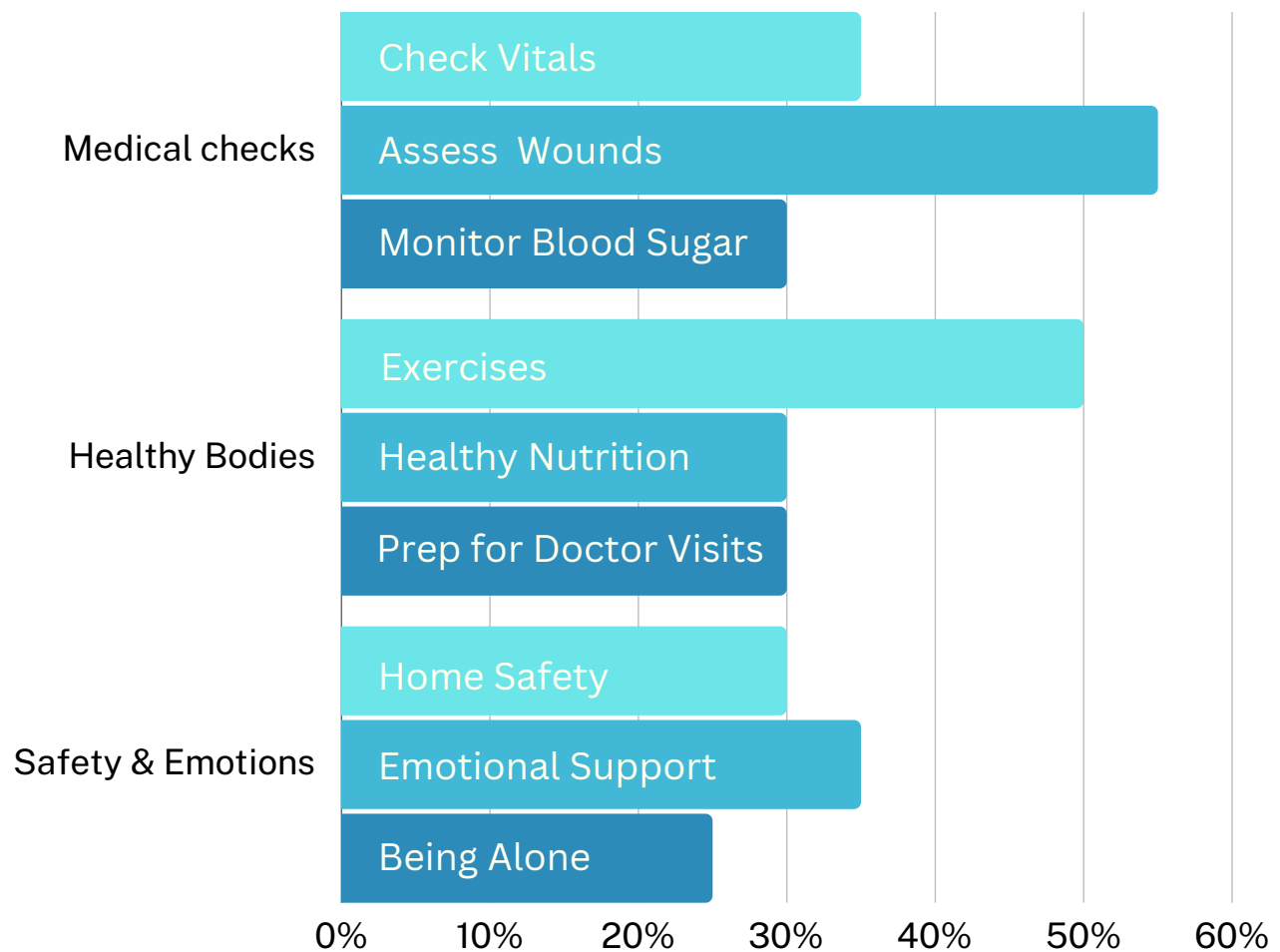
Feasibility Study Results

Is there community need?

Putney Community Services Coordinator, Ruby McAdoo, was fully aware of an increasing need for home nursing services not met by existing programs. She presented the Board with a proposal and with the Board's approval, she sought a grant to initiate the recreation of a Community Nurse Program. A small committee formed once the grant was received. Their initial step was to define a Community Nurse, not to be confused with a Visiting Nurse, and secondly to develop a survey for distribution to Putney residents in a variety of ways. While recognizing the shortcomings of a survey, the committee believed the responses from even a small sample would be valuable information in moving forward.

In May 2023, Kristin Barnum, RN and a member of the Community Nurse Connection Board contacted Putney Community Cares. She offered to meet with any interested individuals to present the findings of the culmination of the work by Upper Valley Community Nursing Project. The findings from this eight year project confirmed implementing a Community Nursing Program positively impacted residents of a town. In May, 2023, Kristin shared her report in support of a Community Nursing Program with a small group from Putney, Westminster and Grafton, Vermont.

Concerns/Interests Identified from Community Nurse Feasibility Study



Feasibility Study Results, continued...

The Upper Valley Community Nursing Project came into existence about eight years ago and provided Community Nursing care in the Upper Valley region of VT and NH. During those years this group of nurses gathered data recording the number of clients each month, number of encounters each month, types of encounters in a month and the interventions per each encounter. The Upper Valley Community Nursing Project presented the results of their work and have received support from the State of VT to provide support to Community Cares Programs and assist them in establishing a viable Community Nursing Program. The groups involved in The Upper Valley Community Nurse Project recognized they were no longer a project but a sustainable community program and have renamed their program “Community Nurse Connection.” The data gathered during the years proved the care provided by a Community Nurse was not only beneficial to the individuals and their families but decreased unnecessary visits to the ER or Urgent Care.

Interestingly, the report presented by Kristin Barnum from the eight year nursing project confirmed that care many of her clients received, reflected the results of the survey conducted by Putney Community Cares. Providing emotional support and reducing issues of anxiety and isolation was a top item addressed by Upper Valley Community Nursing Project and identified as one of the top concerns of Putney residents responding to the survey. Putney residents felt strongly about having support around home safety, wound checks, vital sign checks, especially blood pressure checks and having assistance with preparation for a medical provider's visit and processing medical provider's instructions. In addition, there was considerable interest in exercise programs such as Living Strong for bone health, Tai Chi and yoga for balance and walking for all around health.

Moving forward, the data of the recent survey supports the Board of PCCI’s decision to explore re-establishing the Community Nurse Program (CNP). This Feasibility Study aims to provide data supporting the implementation of a strong and sustainable Community Nurse Program.

Word Cloud from Community Nurse Feasibility Study



Logistics and Technical Considerations

In the past, Putney Cares provided Putney residents with a Community Nurse. Today, PCCI offers a foot care clinic once a month, operated by a nurse. No other nursing services are offered. In launching a CNP, there are several logistical considerations to be addressed:

- Deciding where the office would be for the Community Nurse Program. It would appear that sharing the office of Putney Community Cares would be the best location at least initially.
- Adding a phone line through Putney Community Cares (PCCI) for the CNP might be necessary.
- Updating PCCI's website to include information for the CNP and contact information.
- Advertising to reach community members who would benefit from a CNP.
- Educating residents about the role of a CN and her scope of practice.
- Evaluating previous CNPs offered by Putney Cares and identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Licensure

The nurse hired to fill the position as the CN will be required to carry their own malpractice insurance allowing this individual to work within the scope of the RN's license.

Putney Community Cares carries their own insurance to cover activities they are directly involved with. Because the RN would be an independent contractor, the Putney Community Cares would not need to carry additional insurance for providing a community nurse program through their office.

Insurance

The RN hired will be required to have their own malpractice insurance as identified in the contract. PCCI does not carry any insurance currently for covering specific nursing clinics. Nursing clinics held at the PCCI office would be considered an event and are covered by PCCI liability insurance.

Equipment & Supplies

At the present time, the Community Nurse Connection (CNC) is offering some supplies as are available. They have in the past provided a free laptop and/or an ipad or a cell phone for a Community Nurse. A nursing bag, infection control supplies, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, pulsometer and an infrared thermometer will be provided to the Community Nurse hired as necessary. Often, the CNC have those items donated to their program.

Office space will be available at the Putney Community Cares Office for the CN along with a locking file cabinet to keep confidential records and reports. A phone line will be available through the PCCI office.

Staffing

There would be one RN hired to fill the position. The RN should divide the time throughout the month for there to be nurse coverage each week. It has been suggested by Community Nurse Connection to provide 10 hours per week of community nursing making the CN position be a 40 hour per month position.

Initially, administration will need to set up email and voicemail for the nurse, update the website to include info about the Community Nurse and the contact info for the CN. PCCI administration's monthly commitment would be to review invoices and nursing reports and provide a report to the Board and to the RN at Community Nurse Connection.

Funding

As of the writing of this report, Putney Community Cares has not secured any grant funding to establish a CNP for the first year. PCCI's Fundraising Committee can work to seek funding to re-establish the Community Nurse Program for the first year while researching long-term funding for continuation of the Program for the years to come.

Funding for the CNP needs to cover additional administrative time, additional office supplies not available through Community Nurse Connection (CNC), nursing supplies necessary to implement the CNP and not available through CNC and a 40 hour per month salary for the RN for the next 12 months.



Operational Feasibility

What will it take to become operational?

Board Approval

Prior to the creation of a Community Nurse Program (CNP), PCCI will need to have board approval in order to move forward. The results of the Feasibility Survey will be presented to the Board by December 2023 with the hope of receiving approval to move forward for a 2024 launch.

Hiring the Nurse

Once Board approval takes place, the Board's work will be to explore and secure funding for the program. A job posting will be done once the Board has guaranteed funding for the short term with a financial plan in place to develop long term funding. The Board should consider using professional websites along with community outreach to post the job. The job description will be posted with the application.

Equipment

It is unclear what equipment may actually need to be purchased by PCCI for the CNP, due to the fact there could be some equipment available through Community Nurse Connection (CNC). Once the program receives Board approval, PCCI should contact Kristen Barnum, RN with CNC and identify what equipment and supplies could be provided to PCCI. At that time, PCCI will know what is still needed.

Marketing

Today, there are many avenues for marketing the program. PCCI has an email list and will use this to inform residents of the launch of the CNP. This will require additional administrative time to not only send out the information to community members but then to create a way to keep inquiries in one place. Social media and word of mouth will be utilized to spread the word. It is very possible the nurse will receive requests from medical offices and family members. Outreach will be done with all local medical providers and local hospitals to inform them of the CNP.

In addition, we will plan to host multiple "Meet the Community Nurse" events at the start of the program and at intervals throughout the year. These events will provide people an opportunity to meet the nurse in-person, ask questions about services and voice interest in other health-focused programs and services.

Financial Feasibility

What is the cost? How do we fund this program?

As this is a new program, we anticipate some variability in budget. The Fundraising Committee of PCCI will seek grant opportunities to support the startup of a Community Nurse program, but it is anticipated that some amount of the funds will come out of the PCCI general funds. The budgeted salary for the CN will begin at \$40.00 per hour, and could increase to \$50/hour. It was recommended the CN be available to see residents 10 hours per week.

The Community Nurse Connection is offering to grant \$5,000 for start up expenses related to launching a Community Nurse program. An application will need to be completed by the PCCI Board. It is recommended that PCCI reach out to the Town of Putney requesting a matching amount of funding for a Community Nurse Program.

BUDGET ITEM	PROPOSED AMOUNT
NURSE'S SALARY (STARTING AT \$40/HR FOR 10 HRS/WEEK)	\$20,800
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (\$25/HOUR FOR 1 HR/WEEK)	\$1,300
PHONE SERVICE	\$300
REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL	\$800
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$500
NURSING SUPPLIES	\$1,000
INSURANCE (ORGANIZATIONAL & CONSULTANT STIPEND)	\$300
MARKETING	\$2,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$27,000

Launching Community Nurse Program

Timeline

Early 2024 is currently the timeline to begin offering Community Nurse services through Putney Community Cares. The hiring of the Registered Nurse will have the greatest impact on when the program is actually launched. Outreach has been made to Community Nurse Connection for assistance in providing supplies they have available.



Job Description: Expectations of Scope

TITLE	Community Nurse
REPORTS TO:	Putney Community Cares
OVERVIEW:	<p>The focus of the community nurse is on home visiting, teaching, coaching, and integration of services as well as prevention of disease and promotion of health for individuals and the community. The ultimate goal is to provide care which will help allow a client to remain in their home safely.</p> <p>The community nurse is an independent position. They work with Putney Community Cares along with the primary care providers of clients, town officials and other involved organizations as needed. The Community Nurse will be providing direct home care visits in most cases and making assessments for Putney residents who are not eligible for VNA services or other similar insurance covered programs. Clients are not charged for the care provided by the community nurse. This position does not take the place of visiting nursing services covered by insurance.</p>
RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making home visit to assess physical and social well being • Developing care plans and reviewing it with the medical provider as indicated • Documenting interventions and outcomes. Reports to be included in data gathering by Community Nurse Connection. • Acting as an advocate for clients who may need help navigating the healthcare system • Communicating regularly with client’s care team including their medical providers and their other care providers such as family members or friends • Assisting with advanced care planning • Making/facilitating referrals to VNA, COA, medical providers and to other organizations in the area including meals on wheels, food banks, and social service agencies to maximize home based care • Assessing the needs of the community by working with Putney Community Cares and other community groups • Educating the community about health, nutrition, hygiene, and disease prevention and providing clinics within the community as needs are identified • Attending Community Nurse Connection monthly support meetings via zoom
JOB QUALIFICATIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelors in Nursing preferred, active VT RN license • Must carry own malpractice insurance • Must have own health insurance • Strong health assessment skills. Must have an ability to provide nursing care independently and be able to assess when a medical provider/physician should see the client and provide additional necessary medical care. • 2 plus years of experience in home visiting nursing such as with VNA or hospice or other independent nursing experience • Understanding of local resources • Maturity in the nursing profession • Excellent time management skills • Data collection regarding specific care provided for each client. There is a data program available to PCCI and the CN from the Community Nurse Connection meeting all the HIPAA requirements.

Launching CNP, continued...

Sample Contract

We are pleased to offer you the position of Community Nurse. In this position you will begin working as an independent contractor. Your starting date will be _____.

Community Nurse Connection will provide clinical guidance. They hold monthly group meetings with other community nurses, which you are expected to attend. Non-urgent support from Community Nurse Connection can also be accessed from them via e-mail or telephone. Urgent support, of course, would be via the client’s primary care physician or emergency services. The Nurse Steering Committee will provide administrative supervision.

Your rate of pay is \$_____per hour. We have budgeted your workload for up to _____hours per week. _____will render payment for your services on a monthly basis after receiving an approved itemized report of your activities and hours utilized. _____ will provide a Form 1099 to you and the IRS reporting compensation received for the time that you are working as an independent contractor.

Use of your vehicle in conjunction with your duties will be compensated at the rate established by the IRS standard mileage guidelines.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, you will indemnify and hold harmless _____, ie: officers, directors, partners, representatives, agents and employees from and against any and all, suits, liens, judgements, damages, losses and expenses, including legal fees and all court costs and liability (including statutory liability) arising in whole or in part and in any manner from injury and/or death of person or damage to or loss of any property resulting from the acts, omissions, breach or default.

It is expected that you will maintain a current RN license and professional liability insurance for \$ 1million per claim and \$6 million aggregate. _____ will reimburse you for your license renewal and up to \$200 per year for liability insurance.

Scheduling periods of absence needs to be discussed with the steering committee in order to ensure coordination of client care.

We look forward to working with you and appreciate you signing and dating this agreement below, indicating your acceptance of this offer.

Signed_____ Date:_____
Community Nurse

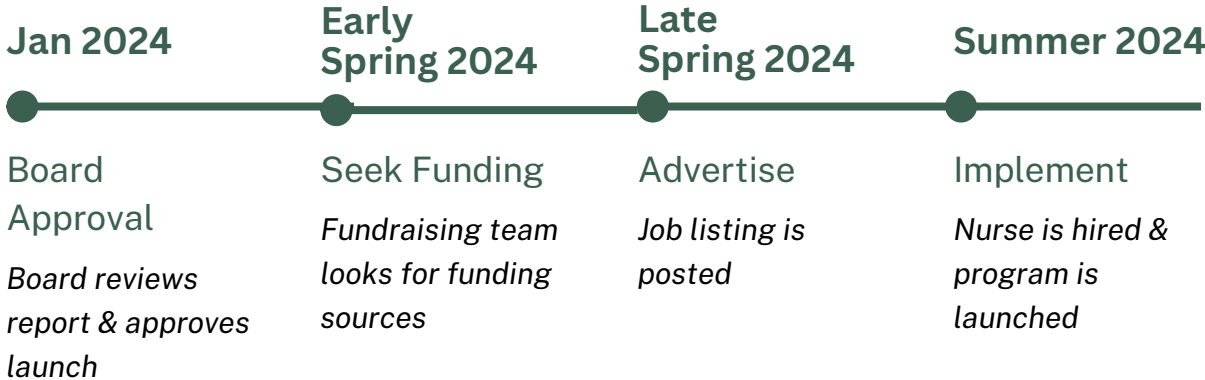
Signed_____ Date:_____
Putney Community Cares



Overall Takeaways

What is next?

The recommendation after compiling this report is that a Community Nurse Program would add immense value to the Putney Community, and that Putney Community Cares is well-poised to re-start a program. Key steps from approval to implementation are:



- There is a phone line for the CNP at PCCI to use. An answering line for leaving general or specific messages for the CN can be set up. .
- There is an area in the office where a small desk can be set up for the nurse along with a locked file cabinet.
- The Community Nurse Connection (CNC) has offered to provide orientation to the community nurse hired along with the documentation program they offer to be used by CNPs.
- Putney Community Cares is eligible for a \$5,000 grant from CNC. This application should be completed by the Fundraising Committee of PCCI as soon as possible. The Fundraising Committee needs to be creating a list of potential donors to reach out to once this Feasibility Study is approved by the Board.
- There is still a possibility for the sharing of a Community Nurse between two communities.
- Vacation time by the CN will not need to be covered. The CN will have provided the client and their family with information about accessing support in a time when the nurse will not be making a visit or calling the client.
- Clients and their families will be provided with support and education about how to set up the client’s medications in a safe manner that does not require the use of a pill planner. There are several reasons to avoid use of a pill planner.

Page left intentionally blank

Contact us for further inquiries

www.putneycommunitycares.org
coordinator@putneycommunitycares.org
(802) 387-5593

