Home Health Primary Care Assist

It is a situation that happens all too frequently. A person is feeling unwell and calls the doctor’s office to make an appointment, only to discover there is no available time in that day’s schedule. At that point the choice for the patient becomes an urgent care walk-in clinic or the Emergency Department. Both of which can be expensive and often unnecessary solutions.

VNA is working on a solution to this situation.

VNA and the University of Vermont Medical Center’s Essex Adult Primary Care staff began a new pilot program last July to test a collaborative patient-centered care model between home health agencies and primary care offices.

If a patient is unwell and calls the Essex Adult Primary Care’s office for an appointment, but there are none available, the doctor’s office will call the VNA. Our VNA nurse contacts the patient to review the patient’s history and within two hours is at her front door. The nurse performs a complete assessment of the patient with a focus on the current health condition, and calls the primary care physician to discuss the patient’s condition. Together, they determine next steps, which may include scheduling a follow up appointment with the physician the following day, admission to VNA home health services, or if needed, a visit to the emergency department.

“Our hope with this pilot program is that patients will be able to avoid more expensive and, often unnecessary, Emergency Department or urgent care visits, while still receiving timely care,” says Terry Paquin, VNA Director of Adult Home Care services.

This type of innovative model is reflective of the current shift being made in health care delivery. Increasingly, care previously delivered in hospitals is now being done in homes and the community in partnership with physicians and hospitals.

Currently the pilot is being tested with a small number of primary care physicians at the UVM Medical Center’s Essex Adult Primary Care practice. VNA meets with the triage nurse team at the primary care office to regularly review patient calls and referrals to the program.

“The exciting aspect of this program is that we are able to see patients before their condition worsens and work as an extension of the patients’ primary care to help them manage chronic illness and remain at home,” says Terry.

“Another benefit to this program is that people who may not realize what services the VNA provides or whether they are eligible for these services can now be introduced to our services,” says Jean Harry, RN, one of the VNA nurses on call during the week to answer any calls from the doctor’s office.

It is still early in the timing of the new pilot program and more experience is needed to determine how and when this could be taken to a broader scale. However, early results show positive outcomes for patients who have been referred to the program.

And physicians are very interested in participating in the future phases or expansion of the program. So, the next time you call your doctor and need to be seen that day, you may be asked, “Would you like a VNA nurse to see you today?”
New VNA Board Members

VNA WELCOMES three new members to the Board of Directors.

John Bartlett is a Senior Account Analyst at Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. John previously worked at

Status of Women under President Bill Clinton and Deputy Assistant for Women’s Concerns for President Jimmy Carter, she currently serves as a board member of the United Way of Chittenden County and as co-chair of its Women’s Leadership Council.

Harriet Williams, EdD, is the founder and executive director of Dress for Success Burlington. Previously she served as the director of the TRIO/Student Support Services Program at the University of Vermont. After receiving a B.A. in English and a Master’s in Liberal Studies, Harriet completed her Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at the University of Vermont.

The VNA also welcomes former VNA Board Chair Jim Madison to the Honorary Board. The following officers were elected for 2015-2016: John Maitland, Chair; Barbara Martin, Vice Chair; Sandy McDowell, Treasurer; and Frank Harris, Secretary. Hal Colston is the new Chair of the Honorary Board.

Vermont Respite House, a Medicare-certified hospice home, has provided care for 25 years. But the facility has become too small and no longer suited for the provision of inpatient hospice care for the residents and families the VNA serves.

A population-based analysis concluded that VNA needed to expand from a 13-room to a 22-room home to meet community needs. The State of Vermont Green Mountain Care Board approved the VNA to build a new home in Colchester, replacing the current Williston home.

“In the last 25 years, we’ve seen the need for residential hospice care grow along with an aging population and heightened awareness of the benefits of hospice care. The new Respite House will allow us to respond to this increasing demand,” said VNA President Judy Peterson.

The new Respite House will include larger and more resident rooms, each with a private bathroom, shower and space for family to stay overnight, enhanced work and meeting space for staff and volunteers, and improved kitchen and family gathering spaces. Construction began this fall, and is expected to be completed by summer of 2016. Details for a campaign for community support will be announced in early 2016.

Published by the

VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF CHITTENDEN AND GRAND ISLE COUNTIES
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Unless otherwise indicated, all photos by Daria Bishop Photographers

For 110 years, VNA has been providing home health services every step of the way.

VNA WAS THERE for Chris when he had optic neuritis, an inflammation of the optic nerve and an early sign of multiple sclerosis (MS). Since then, the VNA has provided physical therapy visits, social work support, and Long-Term care services.

“Without VNA’s help, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” Chris said. “For the first time since I was diagnosed with MS, I feel like I’m in control of my life.”

The support of our community helps ensure that the VNA can continue to serve all who turn to us – every step of the way.

Please consider a tax-deductible gift to the VNA Annual Fund. Visit vnacares.org/donate or call 802.860.4475.

VNA ANNUAL FUND
Join us as we celebrate 110 years of caring for families & children at this year’s Spring Blooms Fashion Show & Dinner

April 14, 2016

New Time!
4:30-6:30 pm

New Location!
DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in South Burlington, VT

Enjoy a cocktail reception with live music by jazz band, In the Pocket. This will be followed at 5 pm by a delicious dinner and fashion show featuring local clothing: Sortstyle, Ecco Clothes, Orvis, Spellbound, and Little Luna Blue.

The clothing will be modeled by community friends and members of their families. This year’s models include: Jon and Jennifer Ayers, Kendra Barber-Smith, Brian Boardman, Hal Colston, Dr. Claude Deschamps, Cliff Deetjen, J. Churchill Hindes, Benjamin Yousey-Hindes, John Maitland, Judy Peterson, Jackie Reno, Mayor Miro Weinberger and Eileen Whalen.

There will be raffle prizes.

Also during the evening, we’ll have a live auction with featured items like Walt Disney World passes, JetBlue tickets and jewelry from Perrywinkles. And guiding us through the evening will be emcee and local comedian, Autumn Spencer.

A very special thanks to Peregrine Design/Build and Hanson & Doremus Investment Management for their sponsorship of this event.

The cost is $65/person or reserve a table for $650. To register for this event, visit www.vnacares.org/Fashion16.

We’d also like to thank our additional sponsors: Bergeron, Paradis and Fitzpatrick, Dine, Knapp & McAndrew, P.C.; National Life Group; Northfield Savings Bank; PC Construction; Pines Senior Living Community; Queen City Printers Inc.; Wake Robin; Berry Dunn; Cauela Waste Systems Inc.; Essex Outlets and Cinemas; Gadue’s Dry Cleaning; Kinney Drug Foundation; Merchants Bank; New England Federal Credit Union; Paul Frank & Collins; Pomerleau Real Estate; and Vermont Electric Power Company.

Family Room Update

The VNA has supported the Family Room for 28 years because we believe strongly in the importance and value of the program to families. Given our commitments to our home health and hospice mission and changes in the healthcare system, the VNA is undertaking a comprehensive and inclusive process to plan for the Family Room’s future as a standalone organization or as part of another umbrella organization. Community support, including attendance at this year’s Fashion Show, will help VNA maintain Family Room programming throughout this transition.
PCA Training Program

LINDA GYESI moved to the United States from Liberia in 2013, not knowing what she would do for work. Her sister told her about a free training at the VNA to become a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) – no experience necessary.

PCAs provide care to people who need extra support managing everyday tasks and responsibilities to remain in their home.

The training was the first step of the VNA’s Career Ladder Program – an innovative program that recruits, trains, and offers entry-level home health employment with advancement opportunities.

In one year, Linda advanced through 3 levels of PCA training, earning tiered promotions and wage increases. She then completed the VNA’s 167-hour Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) course, and is now an LNA for VNA.

Linda fell in love with caring for people in their homes. “I love making their breakfast, dressing them so they look pretty for the day, cleaning for them, talking to them.” When she received her LNA license, Linda said, “I cried tears of joy.”

VNA received a $90,000 grant from Vermont Department of Labor’s Workforce Education and Training Fund for the Career Ladder Program. The grant allows the VNA to train 60 new PCAs plus 14 PCAs to be mentors to new PCAs.

PCA Educator Heidi Brodtman says, “Adding mentors provides another rung on the Career Ladder for current PCAs while new PCAs get role models to help them with hands-on skills, communication and problem solving. New PCAs will develop self-confidence, increase their job satisfaction, and take better care of VNA clients.”

The new grant also allows VNA to train and hire up to 14 LNA – a position with more responsibilities, higher wages, and more benefits, including tuition reimbursement for LNA pursuing a Registered Nurse (RN) license. And, four incumbent LNAs will be trained as LNA Mentors.

The wife of Linda’s client once told her, “VNA is blessed to have you.” For Linda, the feeling is mutual. “The VNA family is so sweet; they always encourage me,” Linda said. “I’m going to take any learning opportunity the VNA has to offer.”

To learn more about the program, visit vnacares.org/ pca-careers/.

In Memoriam

We deeply appreciate that the VNA and its programs were named to receive memorial gifts between July 1, 2015 and January 31, 2016 in remembrance of the following people. We thank their families for honoring their loved ones in this meaningful way.

VNA Home Care
Constance Ablin
Shagen Arakelyan
Lorain Barber
Richard Bellino
Paul Brusseau
Sharon Cheltra
Carol Cohen
Robert Coon
Richard Corey
Frances Donovan
Dina Edelman
James Forest
Barbara Gordon
Donna Hazlett
Bessie Hunter
Carol Johnson
John LaCrosse
Mae Lamore
Ghislaine Levellier
George Manieri
Barbara Mcdermott
Thomas McGreggor
Elaine Morgan
Josephine Newell
Lyle Peterson
Elva Ratta
Robert Richard
Arthur Robert
Pauline Sauve
Bernard Soulie
Nicolette St. Hilaire
Christine St. Peter
June Stoe
Terence Vaughan
Donna Viau
Carl Viau

VNA Hospice Program
William Aswood
David Baillie
Howard Barton
Patricia Cook
Arline Cunningham
William delCrito
Sten Fersing
James Forest
Norman Frenette
Whyned Howard
Carol Johnson
James Kiepert
Geraldine Mills
Elin Parmenter
John Savo
Vernon Shea
David Stancil
Robert Van Kleeck
Stella Zaganjeski
Claudette Gabous
Glenna Germain
Evelyn Gregoire
Robert Greiner
Nancy Gunnesson
James Hayes
Gary King
Barbara Knight
Thomas Kestia
Arleene Lucia
Brian Lucia
Karen Luciano
Debra Maestro
Rebecca MacIldoch
John Martin
Loretta Martin
Theresa Martin
Jane McGill
Robert Mcmillian
Christine Melkonian
Donald Myers
Dorothy O’Neal
Patricia Pellerin
Robert Penders
Velma Porter
Allen Porter
Lillian Raymond
Myna Redmond
Virginia Reeves
Wesley Richards
Thomas Rideout
Franklin Ryder
Arlene Safron
John Savo
Janice Sheean
Shirley Sherrer
Anthony Smith
Sonja Solomon
Lyman Spinnner
Frederick Sproger
Jaime Lynn Taylor-Danner
L. Edmond Thibault
Carl Viau
Thomas Wilson
Theodore Wyman

Home Health Star Ratings

When home health care is needed, you want to know you can trust the quality and service of the care you receive. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services understands this and created the Home Health Compare website on Medicare.gov, to help you learn about the available Medicare-certified home health agencies. But, even this can be a lot to review when evaluating options.

To help consumers choose a home health provider, Medicare has introduced a new Star Ratings system. Detailed performance results remain on the site, but the ratings are an additional tool to support consumers in making a decision. It is based on completed clinical assessments and Medicare claims data that demonstrate how well agencies help patients achieve outcomes like reducing shortness of breath.

Medicare assigns ratings for both clinical quality and patient satisfaction. Our VNA is currently rated 3½ stars for clinical quality and 4 stars for patient satisfaction. Based on star ratings for all home health agencies, we are equal to or better than 73% of agencies nationally.

“The Star rating gives organizations a benchmark to support continuous quality improvements of the patient care we provide and our process,” says Angel Means, VNA VP of Quality and Education. “We are proud of our current rating, but we will continue to find ways to improve and increase our rating.”
Applause

This fall, VNA staff, volunteers and friends gathered to honor staff celebrating milestone anniversaries. Pat McGarry, RN, and Lisette Baxter, RN, were both honored for their 35 years of service. Allison Mercure, Donna LaFromboise-Perretta, Toki Eley, Diane Bacon, RN, Linda Alderman and Mae-Gene Zimmer were all recognized for their 25 years of dedicated work for the VNA.

Also at the dinner, the VNA Richard H. Wadham Award was presented to Bobby and Holly Miller, VNAs highest honor given to individuals who provide outstanding support to VNA programs and participate in efforts to increase public awareness of home care and related services to our community. The Millers were applauded for their years of dedication to quality end-of-life care and their continued work in leading the project to build and expand the Respite House.

Photographer Daria Bishop received the J. Churchill Hindes Community Service Award for her exemplary service and support of the VNA. Her photographs over the last 10 years of the VNA truly communicate the meaning of the VNA’s work caring for individuals and families.

Pam McPherson, a trained VNA hospice volunteer for more than 30 years, recently celebrated the publication of “Vigil: The Poetry of Presence,” a collection of poems inspired by her experiences sitting with individuals during the last days and moments of their life.

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of Noyana, VNA’s volunteer hospice chorus. These trained hospice volunteers offer songs of comfort at the bedside of those who are nearing the end of life.

Adult Day Grand Opening

An open house was held recently to celebrate the opening of a new Adult Day Program location in Essex Junction. The new location takes the place of a smaller Adult Day site that was located in Williston. The VNA has seen growth in the Adult Day program in recent years, and this created a challenge for the Williston location. The new location in Essex Junction increases the VNA’s overall Adult Day Program capacity, with room to serve up to 40 clients, including 10 spaces dedicated to clients with memory impairment.

The open house was attended by many, including Senator Michael Sirotkin, and offered the community the opportunity to see the new location and learn more about our Adult Day programming.

Toki Eley, Family and Children’s Services Director, has been selected to receive the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award from KidSafe Collaborative. This honor is bestowed upon individuals in our community who have made significant contributions to improving the safety and welfare of children in Chittenden County. Toki has been a passionate and untiring advocate for children and families during her 25 years of service at the VNA and through her work on local and statewide committees focused on improving children’s health and wellbeing.
Camp Knock Knock
Weekend Family Bereavement Camp
June 3-5, 2016 at YMCA Camp Abnaki, North Hero, Vt.
This annual weekend camp is for families with children who have experienced the death of a loved one. It’s a weekend of open support and guidance, with families receiving opportunities for growth and healing from skilled counselors and trained volunteers. For more information about this camp, please contact Ally Parker at 860-4499 x3405.

Join us for our
Vermont Respite House
5K Fun Run & Jiggety Jog
May 7, 2016
Allen Brook School, Williston. Registration opens at 8 am. Run starts at 9 am.
Help us celebrate the 25th anniversary of VNA’s Vermont Respite House, Vermont’s Medicare-certified hospice home. Run, walk, jog, bike and stroll in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one while raising money for the Respite House in this family-friendly event. For more information, please visit www.vnacares.org/run or contact Crystal Vendrell at 802-860-4435 or vendrell@vnacares.org.