A Message from the President

Greetings,

As the calendar moves from spring to summer, we have been busy working on a new budget. Our fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. One constant theme running through the last ten years has been the constant assault by Congress on Medicare payment rates for home health. Overall, rates have been reduced by over 40% over those years. More importantly, from 2014 to 2017, Medicare has reduced home health payment rates by over 19%, including the 14% mandated by the Affordable Care Act. In January, Congress introduced a new payment plan for hospice that penalized agencies for each patient with a length of stay over 60 days. They are looking at other ways to reduce hospice payments.

The reality is our population is aging and many are faced with living with chronic illness. People prefer to receive treatment in their homes and expect that this care will allow them to remain home longer. No one grows up wishing to be a resident in a nursing home. People prefer the quality of life associated with non-institutionalized care. As Americans, we should be free to seek care in the setting we prefer.

The fact that Congress has cut home health reimbursement by Medicare proportionately more than any other segment of healthcare is a real threat. Agencies face growing costs related to wages and health insurance benefits, whose rate of growth far exceed the pace of inflation and are only compounded by the payment cuts. The Affordable Care Act has added to the numbers of the insured, but it has not covered everyone. In fact, many have new coverage with large deductibles or limits in coverage. The demand for free care remains constant.

As a result, home health and hospice agencies face a great challenge in making revenues cover expenses. As a 130 year-old not for profit, we are fortunate to be able to count on donations to support and enhance our operations. Those donations and fund raising activities, some of which are highlighted in this issue, allow us to proudly bear the burden of our mission to provide high quality care without regard for ability to pay. It makes our work very difficult, but it also enriches all of our employees, volunteers, Board members and donors with a true sense of helping those frequently abandoned by public programs. We strive every day to make a difference and with your help and support we truly can succeed. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Walter W. Borginis III

2016 marks our 130th anniversary of service to the Philadelphia Community. As the oldest VNA in America, we are truly the pioneers in public health nursing. Watch for information about a celebration this fall.

Included in This Issue

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In our spring issue of VNA Vital Signs, you read about the family room in the Hospice Inpatient Unit (IPU) being renovated thanks to the generosity of the Green Family Foundation. Now, progress is well underway. Twelve new chairs for the dining area have been put in place, kitchen cabinets have been upgraded (cupboard doors have handles now, too!) and furniture for the living room area has been ordered.

Along with the care and comfort of our patients, a priority is the patient’s family and other loved ones. Providing a warm, welcoming, homelike setting for them was one of the goals when the IPU was constructed. This includes simple things like a living-room area with a sofa where families can gather to watch TV, read, or have a conversation.

The Green Family Foundation Family Room also has a waterfall wall fountain (see photo) that provides the sound of relaxation for reflection or meditation. The waterfall was a gift from VNA of Greater Philadelphia Board of Trustees member Bill Stulginsky and his wife Maryfran when the IPU opened.

In addition to the Green Family Foundation Room, work is also taking place, or is slated to take place throughout the rest of the unit. This includes patient rooms, additional furniture, and flooring and some medical items. **Additional work is slated for this summer.**

A fundraising campaign is now underway to renovate the individual patients’ rooms and all other spaces. Thus far we have raised $53,364.25 toward our goal of $125,000. To make a donation, please contact Maureen Murphy at 215-581-2006, email at mmurphy@vnaphilly.org or via the web at [www.vnaphilly.org](http://www.vnaphilly.org).

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**The IPU Family Room renovations continue**

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**“Before” and “After” Pictures of IPU Floor Renovations**

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**“Before” and “After” Pictures of IPU Renovations**
The Caring Award was established in 1984 to honor those who have made a significant contribution to their community, just as our nurses and other health professionals have done every single day since 1886. The Caring Award is presented to outstanding individuals who evidence a special sense of “caring”. The Board of Trustees and Staff of the VNA of Greater Philadelphia are pleased to present the 2016 Caring Award to Susan Sherman, MA, RN, FAAN and President and CEO of the Independence Foundation, for all she has achieved on behalf of our entire community.

The Independence Foundation is a private, not-for-profit philanthropic organization serving Philadelphia and its surrounding Pennsylvania counties. The Foundation’s mission is to support organizations that provide services to people who do not ordinarily have access to them. With a strong focus on health, the Foundation invests in people and programs that enrich the life experiences of the residents of the Philadelphia area. In addition to health care, the Foundation extends its funding to human services, legal aid and arts & culture, building on the belief that a region that promotes physical well-being, provides equal access to services, values justice, and appreciates the arts will thrive for generations to come.

The Independence Foundation is also one of the VNA’s most ardent supporters.
Meet our patient Rudolfo Almodovar and his wife Aracelis Gonzales. Theirs is a beautiful love story. They were married years ago but each went their separate ways. When Rudolfo was diagnosed and came into our hospice care, he and Aracelis remarried. Their nurse, Amy Scollon, bought the groom his “tux-t-shirt” and bought the bride her veil to wear for the ceremony, which was performed in their home by VNA Chaplain Twana Malone. What a story of Compassionate Care!

As a good Neighbor in the East Falls community, we’ve been invited to bring our Certified Therapy Dog, Stella, (pictured right) and her human to celebrate the Little White Dog daycare center’s Anniversary Open House event (littlewhitedogdaycare.com). Terry Scott, CAVS, our Manager of Volunteer Services, will be there with pamphlets and other information about volunteering for the Agency. What a great opportunity to promote the VNA! We’ll also get coverage in the monthly publication, The East Falls local.

Pictured above: Rudolfo Almodovar and his wife Aracelis Gonzales and family.

Pictured above (left to right): VNA Nurse, Amy Scollon, Rudolfo Almodovar and his wife Aracelis Gonzales and VNA Chaplain, Twana Malone.

Congratulations to Chaplain Jim Ingalls!

Palliative Care Team Chaplain Jim Ingalls has been awarded the House Staff Appreciation Award presented by the Department of Medicine Residency Program at Temple University School of Medicine. Reverend Jim Ingalls, Masters of Urban Ministry, said upon receiving the award that he felt "humbled and grateful for the recognition. "The medical residents themselves do the voting to select "the most positive, pleasant, and influential" person they work with. As Dr. Nicole Kosier put it, "it's like the People’s Choice Award for the most pleasant person you spend part of your day with.” Congratulations to Chaplain Jim Ingalls and the entire Palliative Care Team!
VNA Hospice of Philadelphia Held Its Inaugural Women’s Initiative Luncheon on April 8, 2016

The Inaugural VNA Women’s Initiative gathering was held on Friday, April 8 with the VNA’s legal counsel, Fox Rothschild LLP, as our gracious host.

The excellent presentation was facilitated by Jane Meier Hamilton, MSN, RN and CEO of Partners on the Path. Nearly 30 women (and some men) were in attendance. While the celebration of the Villanova Wildcats’ basketball team’s parade was taking place on Market Street, we were 20 floors above and listening to Jane speak about resilience and how bouncing back can be even better when you bounce forward after difficulty or adversity and find yourself in an even better place than where you began!

The Women’s Initiative has been created to provide women an opportunity to learn, lunch, and network and to learn more about all of the activities taking place in the VNA of Greater Philadelphia and the Hospice of Philadelphia.

The next Women’s Initiative meeting will take place on Friday, July 8, 2016 between 11:45am-1pm. It will be hosted by the VNA’s auditing firm, Baker Tilly. The topic is Women and Money: What Every Woman Should Know About Earning, Spending, Investing and Donating It! The speaker’s name is Nicole Kelly from Voya Financial. Attendance is complimentary but reservations are requested. Just call Maureen Murphy at 215-581-2006 or email her at mmurphy@vnaphilly.org.
Please join us in congratulating our Medical Director, Stanley J. Savinese, D.O., FAAHPM, HMDC, on being honored as a Top Doc in this summer’s issue of Philadelphia magazine’s annual roundup of the best doctors in Philadelphia.

Stan lives in Ridley Park PA with his wife Kirsten and two children Emily (22) and Isaac (16), where he was born and raised. He attended St. James High School in Chester PA, completed a BA in Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania in 1983 and received a DO Degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1987. He served his internship and Family Medicine Residency at the Hospital of PCOM, and then entered private practice in Family Medicine in 1989.

He has maintained active Board Certification in Family Medicine since 1989. He first attained a Certificate of Added Qualifications in Geriatrics in 2000, and first became Board Certified in Palliative Medicine in 2001. He became a Fellow of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine in 2009. Dr. Savinese was affiliated with Crozier Chester Medical Center from 1989 – 2011 where he started the Palliative Medicine program in 2006. He began his current role as the Medical Director of the Hospice of Philadelphia and Co-Director of the Temple Palliative Care Team in 2011. He became a Certified Hospice Medical Director in 2014.

He was voted “Top Doc” in Philadelphia Magazine in May 2016 in the category of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. He says this is an honor surpassed only by privilege of caring for sickest of the sick and their families in their greatest time of need.

When we posted this news on Facebook, we received 71 LIKES (a record for our page!) and many comments, including:

“A wonderful, caring doctor,”

“The Best! And we are so fortunate he is “ours!!”

“You are the best! And so down to earth!”

“That’s our Stan! No surprise here...congratulations! Well deserved!”

“The best ever...we are so proud”

“Stan was our family doctor for many years. What an outstanding physician.”

“Dr. Savinese was our Dr. for many years. We miss him. He is fabulous and what a well deserved honor!”

“Congratulations! Proud to know you!”

“How cool! Congrats!”
On Thursday, April 14, the rock band Lower Level performed a benefit concert for us! Through their efforts, more than $5,000 was raised to provide Free Care for our home health and hospice patients who are under-insured or who have no insurance at all. Providing Free Care enables us to live our mission of taking care of people “regardless of their ability to pay.”

Our Director of Management of Information Services (MIS), Brian Sharkoski leads the band and spearheaded the charitable endeavor. Also performing during the concert was the band Vintage Stew. Members of the VNA staff performed as well! Marketer Teresa Wiegel sang Van Morrison’s “Brown Eyed Girl,” with CFO Dawn Michelizzi as back up. Hospice Administrative Assistant, Liza Dioso performed “Real Love,” by Mary J. Blige and EVP for Homecare, Karen Alston, sang Gladys Knight’s “Midnight Train to Georgia” with Administrative Assistant Pat Hunt and SVP for Development, Maureen Murphy acted as the “Pip-ettes” with the entire staff singing along, too!

This “third-party fundraiser” is a model of how any person or organization can raise funds of behalf of the VNA. If you are interested in learning how you might organizer a fundraiser for us, please email Maureen Murphy at mmurphy@vnaphilly.org or call her at 215-581-2006. Thank you!

May 6-12 was National Nurses Week

National Nurses Week is always held May 6-12 in order for the last day of the celebration to coincide with Florence Nightingale’s birthday.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was a celebrated English social reformer and statistician, and the founder of modern nursing. She came to prominence while serving as a manager of nurses trained by her during the Crimean War, where she organized the tending to wounded soldiers. She gave nursing a highly favorable reputation and became an icon of Victorian culture, especially in the persona of “The Lady with the Lamp” making rounds of wounded soldiers at night.

We celebrated here by sending all of our nurses a thank you note that included a Wawa gift card. We have the best and most compassionate nurses! We appreciate them very much!
Please Join us for our Butterfly Release

VNA Hospice of Philadelphia will hold its 6th Annual Butterfly Release Memorial Service on Thursday, June 30, 2016 at 3pm here at the Falls Center at 3300 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129.

The Butterfly Release is a meaningful and beautiful way to reflect on the memories of our loved ones who have passed and to celebrate the present. Hundreds of butterflies will be released simultaneously as memories are shared between families and friends.

Please join us in sharing this special event where we all may have an opportunity to support each other. A $30 donation is accepted for each butterfly released and an acknowledgement will be sent to the designated recipient. This is an ideal way to remember family and friends.

For more information or to make your donation, please contact Karen Zielinski at 215-581-2080 or via email at kzielinski@vnaphilly.org.

What is HIPAA?

It stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, but for most people it brings to mind the section of it that has to do with keeping your healthcare information private and secure.

Officially, the effective compliance date of the Privacy Rule was April 14, 2003. The HIPAA Privacy Rule regulates the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) by "covered entities" (generally, health care clearinghouses, employer sponsored health plans, health insurers, and medical service providers that engage in certain transactions.) PHI is any information that concerns health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that can be linked to someone. This includes any part of an individual's medical record or payment history.

We are committed to our patients’ privacy; we take this Act very seriously.
Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Jerry Francesco

Jerry started his career as a pharmacist on staff at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. In 1967, he accepted the position of Director of Pharmacy for the Germantown Dispensary and Hospital of Philadelphia. After leaving that position he became the Founder and President of Delaware Valley Home Care Corp, then the sole shareholder of the successor company, Pentec Infusions, which he has since sold.

Jerry is a valuable and generous Chair of the Board of Trustees and serves other agencies, as well. Most recently, and quite notably, Jerry was the Chair of one of the Committees that helped bring Pope Francis to Philadelphia last September.

M. Elizabeth (“Liz”) Bligan, Human Resources Executive

Liz has over 25 years of experience in a wide variety of Human Resources functions. Throughout her career, Liz has worked with start-ups, small companies, mid-sized companies, and large multinational organizations. Her experience includes global work, as she has managed expatriation processes and worked with colleagues in Germany and Japan. Her experience includes software, manufacturing, chemicals, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies. Liz is currently the head of Human Resources for the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

In addition to Liz’s career in Human Resources, she is a professional singer and recording artist, and has been active with Penn State alumni organizations, including the Board of Penn State’s Alumni Association. She served for over six years on Penn State Great Valley’s Advisory Board. Liz has been on the Board of Trustees of the Visiting Nurse Association of Greater Philadelphia since 2008 and, in addition to being Vice Chair of the Board, also serves as Chair of the HR Committee.

HIP, HIP HOORAY!

Congratulations to our President and CEO, Walt Borginis, who has received the Florence Nightingale Award and membership into the Home Care and Hospice Hall of Fame from the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC).

The presentation of the award, including the formal induction ceremony will take place in October at the 34th Annual NAHC meeting, the largest gathering of home care and hospice caregivers in the world.

NAHC President, Val Halamandaris, says “Walter Borginis is the visionary leader and CEO of the VNA of Greater Philadelphia where he previously served as CFO. His history making reinvention of the VNA has marked him as an expert who has used these talents to help others including guiding NAHC through five years as its treasurer.”

Honorees named to the Home Care and Hospice Hall of Fame since 1982 include Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Senator Robert Dole, former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, President William Clinton, and Diana, Princess of Wales.
The VNA of Greater Philadelphia has been serving wound care patients since its inception in 1886 (then known as Visiting Nurse Services). Some of the most significant advancements that affected wound care began in the late 19th century including the introduction of heat sterilization to prevent infection (1886), surgical wound debridement to decrease infection (1898) and the production and use of gauze dressings soaked in iodine. Now 130 years later, the VNA is providing comprehensive advanced wound care to our wound patients utilizing many of the significant advancements of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

The mid to late 20th century saw major advances in wound care treatment that continue today. Some of the advances that promote moist wound healing were hydrocolloids, hydrogels, nonstick dressings such as calcium alginates, and tissue adhesives. The use of growth factors, collagen extracellular matrix dressings, skin substitutions, and silver dressings are some of the major advances in topical treatments for complicated wounds that continue to grow. Subsequently, the choices in treatments continue to expand. Clinicians need to be aware of the principals of the advanced therapies, but also the various different manufacturers due to the technological differences. Some of the high technology advanced treatments includes Negative Wound Pressure Therapy, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Our team of CWOCNs (Certified Wound, Ostomy, and Continent Nurses) provides education and consultation to our staff on wound assessment, current wound practice and advanced technologies. All of the advanced therapies noted have been used at the VNA over the course of time, and still to this day.

The VNA wound patient population primarily includes surgical wounds, pressure ulcers, diabetic ulcers, vascular lesions, and trauma wounds. We do have smaller percentages of burn patients, skin tears, and inflammatory disorders such as abscesses. Selection of an appropriate wound care treatment based on the wound type and cause is so important to our wound care patient. The benefits of this are improved healing time, increased comfort, improved quality of life, and lower costs.

As science and technology advances in the 21st century, so will the commitment of the VNA for our Wound Advisor program. This commitment is reflected in our nurses who receive the necessary tools and training to provide the most current treatments in a timely fashion. Our Wound Advisor program requires each nurse to be equipped with a camera and laptop to enter digital wound photos and electronic documentation on the wound addendum. The nurse then transfers the information to the secure cloud so the CWOCN can receive data, review patient status and review progress remotely. Our treatment protocols are selected based on the wound type identified and the clinical assessment data entered in our advance wound advisor technology system. This technology aides the wound specialist (CWOCN) to detect wounds in decline early, to identify evidence based protocols for specific wound types based on the clinicians assessments, to monitor ongoing trending analysis of wound healing, and to make treatment recommendations in collaboration with the physician. The VNA can proudly say every patient who has a wound addendum is evaluated by our wound care team.

(Cont’d on next page)
Wound Advisor Program at the VNA in the 21st Century (cont’d)

- The future of advances in wound care will be explosive by the end of this century. Stem cell therapies will likely be introduced. Shock wave therapy is being studied now in animals for burn patients. Technological assessment tools for monitoring wound surface area will be more sophisticated and available. The biggest challenge will likely be the reimbursement and regulatory restrictions that will likely increase.

- The VNA is committed to providing our patients the most current evidence based wound treatment, advanced consultative CWOCN care, and to the development and support of our clinical staff as advances are sure to continue.

- The future of wound care is exciting, and the VNA is proud of our 21st century wound care program!

Author: Suzanne Lampe, RN, CWOCN

References:


What is CHAP?

CHAP stands for Community Health Accreditation Partner. It is an independent, nonprofit accrediting body for home and community-based health care organizations. Every three years, agencies like ours must go through a rigorous examination of the processes of how we do things. We are dedicated to providing the highest quality care to all of our patients and we look forward to demonstrating our best practices to our CHAP examiners. They look at everything from how we keep patients records to the safety and contents of the car trunks of our clinicians.

Created in 1965 as a joint venture between the American Public Health Association and the National League for Nursing, CHAP was the first accrediting body for home and community-based health care organizations in the United States.

The accreditation process is comprised of seven steps - from application to full accreditation. The final accreditation determination is made by the CHAP Board of Review.
SUMMER HEAT SAFETY

Who’s at Highest Risk?
The people at highest risk are individuals aged 65 or older, overweight people, children up to age four, those who work outdoors and people who are ill or on certain medications.

Be Smart!
Don’t leave infants, pets or elderly people in parked cars. Check on elderly and homebound people often. Drink plenty of water. Avoid alcohol and liquids with large amounts of sugar and caffeine, limit vigorous activity to cooler morning or evening hours. Wear loose fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing and wear sunglasses, a wide brimmed hat and SPF15 or higher sunscreen.

Be Aware!
Seek medical help if you or someone you know is experiencing the following: Muscle pain, throbbing headache, cramps, red hot skin without sweating, high body temperature, confusion, nausea, tiredness, weakness, fast breathing, fast, weak pulse and seizures.

First Aid!
Get medical attention if symptoms are severe or victim has a medical issue.

Have a Safe and Happy Summer!

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Walter W. Borginis III, President and CEO/Karen Zielinski, Editor

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