A Message from the President

Greetings,

It’s hard to believe, but we are approaching Spring, the recent snowstorm notwithstanding. Once again, I’m excited to see blooms emerging in our parks, yards and gardens and experience the surprise that sometimes occurs when a particular tree, bush or flower presents itself as more amazing than I’d remembered.

In our Winter newsletter, I discussed our new logo and tag line. At that time, I shared our vision that this tag line spoke to our commitment to provide medically appropriate care and a timely response to requests for our services. Similar to my experience with the Spring blooms, I find myself thinking further about the full extent of the breadth and depth of what this message implies. I believe it speaks to something deeply unique for each of the various audiences we serve.

For our patients, “The right care. Right now,” means you will receive the medical care you require to reach your maximum potential along with the caring and support to help you succeed. Your care will be individualized to where you are right now with your illness or medical condition.

For our clinical partners and referral sources, “The right care. Right now,” means that when you refer a patient to us, you will receive a level of service that meets or exceeds your expectations. Our liaisons, marketers and referral center staff will take the time to understand the needs of your patients and structure a seamless transition process that supports your goals in the timeframe you specify.

For our community, “The right care. Right now,” means that we are committed to serving all in the Philadelphia area with programs and services that are both innovative and effective, ensuring that all of our patients receive the care they need, when they need it. Our 131 year commitment to Philadelphia continues to be unwavering and without restriction.

For our donors, grantors and volunteers, “The right care. Right now,” means that your support makes a difference! With your investments in us, we are able to offer exceptional care. Your generosity enables complex clinical specialties to be readily available and allows us to be responsive to changing needs and new technologies to better serve our patients.

For our employees and those who wish to be, “The right care. Right now,” means that you are part of a team that has tremendous clinical abilities applied in the most caring ways that allow us to make a tremendous difference in our patient’s lives.

Just like the forthcoming Spring blooms, our tag line simply serves as an indicator of the wonderful things we provide. Whichever audience you are in, I invite you to learn more about how we can help you achieve your goals. Thank you for being part of our mission!

Sincerely,

Walter W. Borginis, III

President and CEO

A Note to Our Donors: You Make a Difference!

So much of everything we do to take care of people is because of your generosity. We are grateful beyond words for our donors.

Every day, we receive your gifts in the mail or online at our website www.vnaphilly.org. Many of your donations include a note about why you were moved to give a gift. In memory of a friend or a family member; in honor of a nurse or other care provider who took such good care of you or a loved one; your words are moving and your actions are life changing.

You helped buy new flooring in our hospice unit, you helped purchase the new bags for our clinicians, you enabled us to provide music, massage, and pet therapy to our patients. Your investment in our Agency is making a difference in our community and in people’s lives.

Why do we need your financial help? Contrary to what some people think, we aren’t funded by the City of Philadelphia, insurance doesn’t always pay all of our costs, and we treat patients who aren’t able to pay us. We’re a charity. And you make an impact.

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- We Honor Veterans
- Music Therapy for Hospice Patients
To Know Him Is to Love Him

In 1958, Phil Spector wrote the song “To Know Him Is to Love Him,” sung by the Teddy Bears. We think it could have been written about one of our patients!

Mr. G. was one irresistibly charming man! It’s been said that you could not help but to find him exceptional because he was just so nice, so sweet, so wonderful, and so charismatic. Attentive and thoughtful, he made everyone he met feel special, like he had known you all your life. He loved everyone.

We know all of this is true because as we were getting to know Mr. G. at the end of his days, we learned that he had five former wives, a current fiancée, and 29 children! And here’s the remarkable part…everyone all got along! Their common denominator was they all still liked Mr. G!

In addition to all these warm and wonderful traits, Mr. G. was also still something of a character. Born in Philadelphia in 1936, he served our country in the Korean War as a member of the United States Marine Corps. His favorite color was purple, as it represented royalty, nobility, luxury, power, and ambition, all characteristics he had. He was president of his motorcycle club for many years and could always be spotted wearing his Colors, his cowboy hat and boots, and his duster coat. He was buried in his James West (Wild, Wild West) attire.

He had met his fiancée, Ms. P., while playing pool at his motorcycle club’s clubhouse. Ms. P. wanted to play and thought Mr. G. was taking too long to finish his game so she expressed her opinion to him by throwing her pool stick at him. Probably contrary to the reaction most people would exhibit, Mr. G. laughed and asked her out on a date! The rest, as they say…

Ms. P. emerged into the role of caregiver over the past four years and took wonderful care of him physically and emotionally. His hospice nurses, aides, and social workers became like family to Mr. G. and Ms. P. They were in attendance at his funeral and there were tears from our whole team. As throughout his life with people, Mr. G. loved all of them, too.

A Man and his Dog

Mr. H. and Miles

When a family makes a decision that it’s time for a loved one’s hospice care to begin, there are many factors to consider about which agency they should choose to provide the care. The hospice program at VNA Philadelphia is unique.

Not only do we have doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, aides, therapists and volunteers, who are unparalleled in their skills, but our compassionate care, the VNA difference, is that we also offer families additional levels of comfort for their loved one.

About nine years ago, Mr. H. got a dog and named him Miles after the jazz great Miles Davis. Miles is a little 10 pound Japanese Chin. In Japan, dogs are usually viewed as working or helper animals. The Japanese Chin is unique in that they were bred strictly for companionship. And Miles was the perfect companion for Mr. H., the pair became a well-known sight in the neighborhood as they took their daily walks. They could occasionally be seen stopping to rest on a park bench. Their devotion to each other was apparent to all.

When the time came for Mr. H. to come into our Inpatient Unit, his family was of course, allowed to bring Miles in for visits. Everyone, family, hospice staff, others, drew comfort from the sweet sight of Miles cuddled up in bed with Mr. H.

Another family who also had a loved one in our Inpatient Unit, also saw the sight and asked if Miles could come visit their loved one in his room. Of course! So, Miles went to the other gentleman’s room and hopped up in bed with him for one last moment of providing canine comfort and snuggling for him.
VNA forms exciting new Partnership with Bringing Hope Home

We’re really excited about our new partnership with the nonprofit agency Bringing Hope Home (BHH)! Together we will work together to help families with cancer get the things they need but that aren’t covered by insurance.

Bringing Hope Home’s passion is to provide Unexpected Amazingness, and by partnering with VNA Philadelphia we’ll both be able to do more of it.

UNEXPECTED AMAZINGNESS IS...

- Unexpected amazingness is the sigh of relief families experience when they get a call from Bringing Hope Home letting them know we are able to pay for some bills when they have shut off notices for their rent, oil, and phone.
- Unexpected amazingness is giving a gift card from Bringing Hope Home for groceries when folks may not have eaten in days.
- Unexpected amazingness is when a family has a hole in their roof that they can’t afford to fix, and every time it rains it pours into their house, and Bringing Hope Home lets them know we are able to cover all the costs and schedules it to be fixed for them.
- Unexpected amazingness is when folks are told by Bringing Hope Home that we are able to fill their oil tank when moments earlier they had to turn the oil company away because a family member doesn’t get paid until next week.
- Unexpected amazingness is when a Family Navigator talks to a landlord and negotiates that when we pay one month of your rent, he will give a family one month free.
- Unexpected amazingness is knowing that people care, and are here for families along the way.

Here’s how it will work for us...VNA Philadelphia can make up to two family referrals every month through an online application. Copies of the Light of Hope Family Grant Application (paper version), HIPAA forms, and their online training manual are all provided for us.

As special circumstances for families arise or should anyone have any questions about a referral they wish to make, we are free to call BHH to talk things over.

Family grants will be awarded up to $1,500 with VNA reimbursing BHH for half of the family’s grant total. BHH will send a copy of the family’s grant details, as well as an invoice for half of the family’s grant total to VNA as grants are processed. A follow-up letter will be sent to families. BHH will include our logo and any additional language about VNA Philadelphia that we ask them to.

If we don’t have two families to refer in any given month, we can just roll over to the next month! Unexpected amazingness, indeed!

VNA Philadelphia Butterfly Release

SAVE THE DATE!

The butterfly is a symbol of transformation and is a universal symbol of hope. In many cultures, the butterfly symbolizes the soul. Our Community Celebration of Life and Seventh Annual Butterfly Release is an invitation for us to come together to remember and celebrate the wonderful joys and treasures of our loved one’s legacy as well as celebrate the joys in the lives we are living.

Join us on Saturday, June 24, 2017 from 1-3 pm at the Falls Center, 3300 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129 for our event benefitting VNA Philadelphia’s hospice program. This will be a celebration as hundreds of our neighbors from East Falls, Manayunk, North Philadelphia, Roxborough, and the suburbs gather together for an uplifting and inspirational program. It’s a free and very family friendly event, with special activities just for the kids. Butterfly purchase is separate. There will also be music and a special, very moving tribute to all of our loved ones. Invitations will be mailed soon.
VNA Philadelphia proudly acknowledges our WOCN Program (Wound, Ostomy, Continence). Our nurses are educated through a WOCN Society-accredited Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurse Education Program (WOCNEP) and are certified through the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB®). This certification affirms the advanced knowledge, skill and practice our specialists have to meet the demands of contemporary nursing. Only these nurses can be called WOC specialists. The VNA recognizes the evidence that agencies who have CWOC nurses contribute to better outcomes for their patients and promote an environment of nursing excellence. Our certified nurses are Janie McDaniel, BSN, RN, CWOCN and Suzanne Lampe, MBA, BSN, RN, CWOCN. Janie and Suzanne are experts in treating complex wounds, difficult ostomies and developing incontinence strategies for those patients with identified needs.

In addition to treating patients, Janie and Suzanne also perform education sessions and competency labs for our nurses. Current evidence-based practice protocols are taught monthly to staff for the home health and palliative care/hospice patients. Our specialists have collaborative relationships with physicians, nurses, therapists, social workers, patients and caregivers. It is their expertise that contributes to VNA Philadelphia being an agency of excellence. We recognize their contributions especially during WOC Nurse week which is 4/16/17 thru 4/22/2017.

### Specialty Programs

VNA Philadelphia is well known for the high quality of our Home Health, Palliative, and Hospice Services but we also provide a number of specialty programs for our patients. We recently sat down with Karen Alston to talk about our Diabetes Program.

We provide nursing care to our patients with Diabetes from Chronic Care Certified RNs, who specialize in managing chronically-ill patients with the goal of having the patients become more independent in Diabetes self-management. Patient education is provided using standardized materials that have been approved by the American Diabetes Association. One of the unique things that our nurses do is use the technique of “motivational interviewing” to help patients set their healthcare related goals, identify barriers to goals and find solutions to those barriers.

Goals are patient-focused and developed specifically to address the individual patient’s care needs. We use the information gathered during the motivational-interview sessions to support patients in reaching these goals. For example, if a nurse were developing a patient-specific goal, the goal would state that “the patient would become knowledgeable in Diabetes management, including signs and symptoms of Diabetes complications.” On the other hand, a goal developed by the patient during a motivational interview might be “I would like to be able to go to my granddaughter’s birthday party and eat like a normal person and not be sick for the next two weeks.”

The nurse would then work with the patient to talk through what would enable the patient to reach that goal. The patient would verbalize that following her diet more strictly before the party would help. The nurse and patient would also talk about how to modify behaviors, such as modifying her grocery list, planning ahead for meals, and making better choices. These conversations are self-empowering for patients because a nurse isn’t telling what they can and can’t do or can and can’t have. These self-goals lead to better patient engagement and patients become much more motivated and adherence to the treatment plan improves. It’s success in this series of small goals that leads to adequate self-management.
Kathleen Czekanski, PhD, RN, CNE is the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at La Salle University where she has responsibility for the Nursing, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Nutrition, and Public Health Programs. Kathy joined La Salle over 8 years ago and has held the roles of Director of the Graduate Nursing Program, Associate Dean, and now Dean since 2015. Previously Kathy had been on faculty at Thomas Jefferson’s School of Nursing for 12 years. Her clinical background has been in the area of home care and hospice and while at Thomas Jefferson, Kathy served as the nurse interventionist on two funded research studies out of the Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health. These studies investigated non-pharmacologic approaches to managing difficult behaviors in persons with dementia. This work led to an interest in working with caregivers of persons with dementia as they transition to their caregiving role.

Kathy joined the Board of Trustees of the Visiting Nurse Association of Greater Philadelphia in January 2015 and also serves on the VNA’s Program Committee.

South African Adventure

One of our home hospice nurses, Linda Kamnik, just returned this week from a trip to South Africa!

Let’s get to know Linda a little bit and then hear all about her travels. She has been a nurse for the past 11 years and been providing hospice care since 2010 after starting her career in nursing homes. Linda says the best part of her job are the times when she can make a difference in the life of a patient and their family. She told the story of a gentleman who needed oxygen, but was unable to get to the doctor for it. Linda figured out who the family needed to talk to (they were stuck on figuring the next steps out) made some calls and problem solved! The patient received his oxygen and back-up tanks! She said he was just so grateful that he just held her hand.

Like so many of our clinicians, Linda embraces helping people as a lifestyle and not just a job. The trip to South Africa (with a study abroad group from Rutgers University) was no different. Part of her itinerary, along with some sightseeing, included a visit to Chris Hani Baragwanath Medical Center in Johannesburg, the world’s third largest hospital. She met with some of the nurses there to compare notes on care. The hospital has 3,200 beds and 6,760 employees. Most (70%) of the admissions are emergencies and the maternity center takes care of 60,000 patients a year.

In addition to the hospital visit, Linda toured the Kalksteenfontein Primary School (KPS) in Cape Town. KPS serves 400 students in a neighborhood that is still affected by the terrible history of apartheid. Adults in the community face an unemployment rate of more than 50% and also a very high illiteracy rate. The school is doing the best it can for the students, but many children are hungry. Also, class sizes are a problem because of the lack of funding for salaries, a teacher can have 90 first graders in one class.

And here is another example of VNA Philadelphia’s compassionate employees. When Linda’s team members heard about her trip, they collected bags of all kinds of school supplies for Linda to bring to the children. A little bit of the City of Brotherly Love was shared 8,000 miles away!

Check Our Next Newsletter!

We can’t say anything just yet, but our June newsletter will reveal which one of our doctors has just been named a Top Doc by Philadelphia magazine!
The Annual Assembly, presented by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) and the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA), was a three-day event held in February 2017 that brought together more than 3,200 people in the palliative and hospice care field. They shared research, clinical best practices, and practice-related guidance to advance the specialty and improve patient care.

Stanley J. Savinese, D.O., Medical Director for Hospice, Jane Feinman, MSN, RN, Executive Vice President for Hospice and Linda McIver, CRNP, VNA Hospice and Palliative Care delivered presentations at the conference.

The AAHPM serves as the primary source of information, engagement and support for physicians practicing hospice and palliative medicine. It attracts, develops and sustains a robust workforce composed of competent leaders – including clinicians, educators, and researchers – in order to expand access to hospice and palliative care. The AAHPM also educates physicians within all career stages and practice settings to achieve high levels of competency in hospice and palliative medicine within the context of an interdisciplinary team.

**Family and Friends of former VNA Nurse give back...**

Each year, through the LAOH (Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians) - Division 39, the family and friends of a former beloved VNA Nurse and Patient, **Noulagh McGuinness**, hold a bowling fundraiser in her honor. And this year, they held two! The proceeds of these events (this year totaling $3,960) were donated to VNA Hospice of Philadelphia to help those in need. What a wonderful tribute to Noulagh!

VNA Philadelphia thanks you for your generosity!

**Belgian Waffle Monday**

On Monday, February 20th, our Home Health Patient Care Managers (PCMs) organized a Belgian Waffle Breakfast Fundraiser! Together, they cooked and served waffles, chicken, and bacon for our colleagues. And they cleaned up, too! Thanks to their efforts, $242 was raised for the Patient and Caregivers Assistance Fund.

This fund is money that the staff donates to the Agency. It can be used for all kinds of items that a patient may need but aren’t covered by insurance. Common requests from clinicians for their patients include tub chairs, shower bars, and long-handled brushes. The fund has also been used for groceries, utility bills, and transportation.

**VNA Staff Present at AAHPM Annual Assembly**

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In the VNA Philadelphia Hospice program, we treat our patients and their families with more than just pain relief and comfort, we treat all five of a person’s senses. The sense of hearing is believed to be the last sense to leave a human being. Our Medical Director, Dr. Stanley Savinese said this when asked if this was indeed true. “Yes. I do believe that hearing is the last sense to go. Dying patients who are otherwise unresponsive will often show that they sense their loved ones voices.” What a powerful and awesome message. It’s one of the reasons we believe so strongly in our music-therapy program. People can hear it!

Effects of Music Therapy

According to The Music for Healing and Transition Program, Inc., research shows that music therapy may provide the following benefits:

- Relieve anxiety and stress
- Provide distraction
- Stabilize heart rate
- Reduce blood pressure
- Decrease muscular tension

Comments from our harpist, Lynn, Certified Music Practitioner

“As I begin a music session, it creates a sacred moment and space, stopping time for a minute. People in the same room can have very different experiences. The patient who had been sleeping a lot can suddenly become animated. The family member who has been so busy with care giving and so exhausted from all of the stress can begin to fall asleep or just deeply relax.”

Comments from Patients:

“I had a lot on my mind and your music helped me forget my troubles.”

“I really needed that. This was the highlight of my day.”

“That was my husband’s favorite song. It helps me remember him.”
Contact Us
For more information on our services please call:
215-473-7600
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Or visit us on the web at www.vnaphilly.org.
To make a donation, please contact:
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Sr. VP for Development
215-581-2006
mmurphy@vnaphilly.org
or www.vnaphilly.org to make a donation online. Click Donate Now.

Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Twitter!

How does using social media help us? Lots of ways! Mostly it helps people make decisions about choosing to use our agency for their health-care needs for their loved one. The better they get to know us, the more they understand that it’s our compassionate care that makes the VNA difference! We want everyone to receive our care when they need it.

Social media also gives people the opportunity to see all the things we are doing as an agency. Because we’re a nonprofit charity, we rely on donations from individuals, companies, and foundations. Our social-media presence is a real-time way to keep people informed about our activities and it’s a way to promote our agency’s events.

Our website (www.vnaphilly.org) is also a tool people can use to learn about our agency, our people, and our events. Check us out!

VNA Philadelphia. The right care. Right now.
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