Greetings:

As the many snow storms of March melt into bright hopes for spring, we are reminded of the great and overwhelming power of nature. A severe weather event will likely cancel or delay the best laid plans of anyone. Weather forecasts lead to preparations that are sometimes barely adequate in the face of an overpowering and underestimated storm.

In a similar way, every human knows that their death is inevitable and unavoidable. Yet, very little is really done to properly prepare for it. In fact, just speaking about topics related to death and dying is viewed as inappropriate in many circles and talking about death is frequently discouraged. By overcoming that culture of fear, our hospice and palliative care programs are truly amazing. This year marks the 25th year in which we have provided hospice care to people in our community in a high quality and dignified manner.

In addition to our hospice program, our palliative care program is now almost ten years old. This program features a team approach using our doctors, nurse practitioners, chaplains and social workers. Palliative Care ably fills the gap between hospital care and the transition to home care for patients with chronic disease and pain not yet ready to consider hospice. This program is a perfect example of the VNA developing a program to meet an underserved patient need with quality care and compassion.

Hospice folks are ordinary people who choose to do extraordinary tasks. Every day, they guide patients toward a peaceful end and help our patients’ families cope with the loss. This work takes a special calling that ignores the social taboos that may be associated with the mere discussion of death. Their training and expertise provides expert knowledge and compassionate guidance in an area that many are reluctant to talk about let alone discuss with strangers. Their work exposes them to the continual loss of their patients yet they are able to guide family after family through the most difficult of circumstances. They are ordinary people doing truly extraordinary things on a daily basis. Helping people deal with the human cycle of life with the utmost compassion and care. Demonstrating what it truly means to be human.

I know firsthand the caring and quality of our hospice program. My father was a patient a few years ago. He was well cared for and guided to a peaceful decline. I am grateful for the care he received and the wonderful bereavement program that helped guide our family through the entire process.

In order to help underwrite some of the costs associated with these programs, I encourage your participation and support in our upcoming charitable events benefitting hospice and palliative care: the 2018 Caring Award celebration, our first Jazz Brunch with Silent Auction and our Community Celebration of Life and Eighth Annual Butterfly Release. These events celebrate life and help us support the wonderful efforts of our Hospice and Palliative Care teams. Dates and details are reflected in other parts of this newsletter. Thank you for supporting them.

Sincerely,

Walter W. Borginis, III
President and CEO
Every other year, VNA Philadelphia presents its Caring Award to someone in the community who embodies the practice of caring for members of our community... especially vulnerable populations. This year, on the evening of Thursday, May 17th, from 6-9 pm at the College of Physicians in Center City, we are particularly delighted to honor Jeffrey and Sandy Brown of Brown’s Super Stores as the recipients.

Jeff and Sandy have demonstrated an astonishing determination to uplift our community, to really be part of it, and work to making it even better. Jeff is a fourth generation Philadelphia grocer and is the founder, President, and CEO of the company, which employs more than 2,300 associates who are committed to making a difference for their customers and their communities.

Brown’s is proud to support its community by assisting those in need and partnering with other local organizations to develop and implement solutions to challenging problems. In the communities they serve, they are actively engaged in working with community groups that fight hunger, prevent violence, and help our underprivileged youth have a brighter future by preparing them for viable careers.

It is Brown’s Super Stores’ mission to “bring joy to the lives of the people we serve.” For years running we have been recognized as “The Best Employer” in the Philadelphia region by the Philadelphia Business Journal and are well known for uplifting the lives of their customers and associates in spotlessly clean stores that customize their merchandising to best serve each individual community.

Brown’s Super Stores has been recognized by numerous local and national media outlets, including CBS Sunday Morning, The New York Times and the Philadelphia Daily News for expanding healthy foods access in areas that are considered “food deserts.” They have also been guests at President Obama’s State of the Union address for recognition of their work in our community.

It makes perfect sense for VNA Philadelphia to honor Jeff and Sandy as we also serve our community and have been taking care of people in Philadelphia’s neighborhoods for the past 132 years. VNA Philadelphia and Brown’s Super Stores...at the center of the communities we serve.

Invitations for the event are forthcoming, we hope you will join us. All proceeds benefit VNA Philadelphia’s Hospice Program.
Service Standards of Excellence

Here at VNA Philadelphia, we dedicate ourselves to delivering excellence every day. Whether it’s ensuring our patients’ and our referral sources’ satisfaction or providing excellent customer service to our own colleagues, we’re committed to making the VNA Philadelphia Difference!

We are focused on making everyone’s experience with VNA Philadelphia one of compassionate care. We are working on receiving the highest scores on our Patient Satisfaction Surveys. Excellence is always our goal!

One of the ways we keep track of our progress is making sure that we notice each other’s commitment to being the VNA Philadelphia Difference. We give one another a “Caught You Caring” card that points out a specific act when we caught a colleague caring and really going the extra mile to deliver customer service. Copies of the cards are posted on a bulletin board as a reminder of what a compassionate team we have.

VNA Philadelphia Was Up for the Challenge!

Doug Let the Dawgs Out…and VNA Hospice of Philadelphia Won!

One day in late January, about a week before the Super Bowl, we received a phone call from our counterparts at a large, nonprofit hospice in Boston. Did we want to accept a smack down social-media challenge in honor of our Eagles and their Patriots? Our foil said to us, “you know, we’re very good at winning Super Bowls, we have a lot of practice.” So smug. Our reply: “oh yeah, have you seen "Rocky?""

This being Philadelphia, we embraced the underdog challenge and accepted! We took part in the good-natured, “tough talking” predictions about the game’s outcome daily on Facebook and Twitter.

By the Friday before game day, we were ready! We had a pep rally and a bake sale and we all wore our Eagles gear! The bake sale raised $806 for our Hospice!

In celebration of the Super Bowl, we held a bake sale that raised more than $800 for our hospice program and we held a pre-game pep rally! Go Eagles!

The deal was our CEO, Walt Borginis, was going to have to eat a bowl of New England clam chowder if our Birds hadn’t pulled off the upset! As it turned out, their CEO, Pat Ahern, had to eat a cheesesteak “witt!”
Inaugural Jazz Brunch and Silent Auction

On Sunday, June 3, 2018 from 11 am to 2 pm, VNA Philadelphia’s Inaugural Jazz Brunch and Silent Auction will be held at the Trolley Car Café in East Falls.

Come out and listen to beautiful jazz music while enjoying a delicious brunch and supporting a wonderful cause at the same time!

In partnership with WRTI-FM, Temple University’s radio station, we are delighted to present the music of traditional jazz standards as well some contemporary sounds. Our host for this event is the talented Maureen Malloy!

Maureen began her radio career at WRTI in 1999 while studying broadcasting at Temple University. Determined to make it in the entertainment industry, she took advantage of all the creative opportunities presented to her at WRTI - she hosted the overnight jazz broadcasts through her entire college career, she was an arts and culture reporter, and she soaked up the jazz biz from her many WRTI mentors.

After graduation, Maureen held many positions in the broadcasting and entertainment industries. She worked in casting and as a booking agent for local talent. She taught speech and acting classes for children. And she had a stint in commercial radio working in production. Along with being an independent music promoter in her spare time, Maureen still managed to host jazz at WRTI. And soon it was clear to her that jazz was her true calling.

Maureen finally found her home in an office full of amazing music, and with a sign on the door that reads "Jazz Music Director."

Make sure you take a look at all of the fabulous items at our Silent Auction. There will be many treasures you’ll want to take home with you!

All proceeds from this event will benefit VNA Philadelphia’s Hospice Program. Our Inpatient Hospice Unit is the only freestanding, nonprofit, hospice unit in the entire Philadelphia Metro area.

Invitations are forthcoming. Check out our website at www.vnaphilly.org for further information.

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Information Technology Staff Upgrade Computers

Over the winter, we switched over to 200 new Surface Pros for our clinicians. These units are lighter and faster. They are also setting the stage for our clinicians to eventually be able to move to a tablet.

Our IT Team (left to right) Emily, Brian, Tara, and Gary, our Intern, and our volunteers worked all weekend in February to upgrade computers for our clinicians.
Two Thousand and Eighteen marks the 25th Anniversary of this agency’s hospice program. We are the only non-profit, community based hospice program servicing Philadelphia and the surrounding counties. Our inpatient unit is the only one of its kind. We provides a special kind of care for dying people, their families and their caregivers that treat people’s physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The term “hospice” (from the same root word as “hospitality”) can be traced back to medieval times when it referred to a place of shelter and rest for weary or ill travelers on a long journey. The name was first applied to specialized care for dying patients by physician Dame Cicely Saunders, who began her work with the terminally ill in 1948 and eventually went on to create the first modern hospice—St. Christopher’s Hospice—in a residential suburb of London.

Saunders introduced the idea of specialized care for the dying to the United States during a 1963 visit with Yale University. Her lecture, given to medical students, nurses, social workers, and chaplains about the concept of holistic hospice care, included photos of terminally ill cancer patients and their families, showing the dramatic differences before and after the symptom control care. This lecture launched the following chain of events, which resulted in the development of hospice care as we know it today.

On March 13th, our physicians, chaplains, social worker, and bereavement coordinator launched a new initiative, The Science and Spirituality of Death. It is the beginning of a program fostering greater education, support, and collaboration with our Faith Leaders in Philadelphia. Invitations to attend the first session were sent to more than 1,300 Faith Leaders.

The topic of death and dying is frequently not a comfortable one, yet it is a crucial one as we support the members and families in our spiritual communities. This gathering was a collaborative conversation as we talked about the importance of Faith Leaders in the dying process. We learned how to have the hospice conversation and understand when and why hospice is appropriate.

One of our chaplains, The Reverend Laura Barry, one of our Temple Team doctors, Nichol Joseph, DO, and our Bereavement Coordinator, Zachary Adams lead the discussions.
The Community Celebration of Life features music, free food, games, exhibitors, and health screenings and a lot of fun!
Our beloved mother, Willie Belle, was a perfectionist. Everyone will tell you that she loved her five girls. Everyday she would press five perfectly ironed dresses. Shine five pair of perfectly polished shoes, wash five perfectly cleansed faces and styled five perfectly coiffed pigtails. Our mom was our rock!

With your staffs assistance, we were able to care for our mom in the same way that she cared for us. With your assistance, we now have the comfort and assurance of knowing that she was comfortable until the end. We will forever be grateful for the kindness and compassion you extended to our family during this difficult time. You have touched our hearts.

Sincerely,

Her Five daughters
Addie, Lorraine, Jennifer, Delthea and Veronica

SAVE THE DATE!

VNA PHILADELPHIA’S WOMEN’S INITIATIVE INVITES YOU TO:

Diabetes: What Every Woman Should Know About Preventing, Recognizing, Treating, and Living with It

Friday, May 4, 2018

Diabetes is chronic and rapidly growing disease affecting millions of people. Join us for a panel discussion of the importance of awareness of it and what you can do to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Location: VNA Philadelphia
3300 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129-1121

Registration: 11:45 am
Presentation and Lunch: 12 noon – 1 pm Adjournment
Panelists: Marie Friedmann, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator and Beth Hardiman, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator

This event is complimentary, but registration is requested. Text reservations to 215-307-0478, email mmurphy@vnaphilly.org or call Maureen Murphy at 215-581-2006.

We look forward to seeing you!
An Interview with a Volunteer

We recently interviewed Cortlyn Raynes—Temple Student and Volunteer since May 2017, and here’s what she had to say ......

VNA: What brought you to VNA Hospice of Philadelphia to volunteer?

Cortlyn: I went to a career fair at Temple and saw your table. I recognized how being a Hospice Volunteer could change my life. I wanted to know how to respond to others going through difficult times. My goal is to be a physical therapist, so I need to be comfortable with people who are dealing with losses of all kinds. This allows me to see what it’s like beyond being a physical therapist.

VNA: What is your favorite part of being a Volunteer?

Cortlyn: Meeting so many people and hearing their stories. It’s changed me to be invited to share in patient’s life stories. I’ve learned ways to encourage people to talk by asking a few favorite questions, like “If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you want to go?”

VNA: What do you like to do in your free time?

Cortlyn: I like going to the gym and trying out new things there. I like absolutely any kind of music—I’ll listen to it all! And I like to cook - but I have to cook with spices! I try to eat healthy and I’ve been experimenting with vegan ingredients.

VNA: What advice would you have for a new Volunteer? What do you know NOW that you wish you’d known when you first started as a VNA Hospice of Philadelphia Volunteer?

Cortlyn: Enjoy life’s moments—be appreciative (I am now way more than before I was a Hospice Volunteer). I have classes during the day and I tutor at night, and sometimes I think about skipping a visit to the Inpatient Unit. But I’ll squeeze it in, and it’s always worth it! My day is often changed by a visit to the IPU. Sometimes I leave happier, and sometimes more introspective, but I’m always glad I went.

VNA: What is something you’d like us to know about you?

Cortlyn: I like to try new things. I never repeat a product purchase! I’ll hear a new language and think, “Wow, that’s so cool!” and I want to learn it. I see that there’s so much out there to experience, and I want to do as much as I can.

Welcome to Our Two New Interns

A warm VNA Philadelphia welcome to Shayna and Jon who are our interns from Temple University. Shayna will be working in the IT department and Jon will be in the Development and Communications Office. We are partnering with Temple by offering these (unpaid) internships to their students and in return, their work here this semester provides them with class credits. We also hope that this will be a valuable learning experience for both students.

We sometimes have additional opportunities to offer other unpaid internships. Are you or someone you know interested? Contact Maureen Murphy at mmurphy@vnaphilly.org or at 215-581-2006.
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 on line 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.

Hip Hip Hooray!

Congratulations to Emily Browning, MSW, LCSW, ACHP-SW, who is our Clinical Coordinator for the Palliative Care Team at Temple University Hospital. Her paper “Reflective Debriefing: A Social Work Intervention Addressing Moral Distress Among ICU Nurses,” was recently published in the Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care.

Her research showed that emphasizing the importance of interprofessional collaboration to successfully combat moral distress among health-care workers and may protect them from burnout, detachment, and even quitting their profession. To read the entire article go to https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/zVuXTfXtBs6NXV6AZT9u/full.

An additional big congratulations being sent to Emily Browning for receiving an award at the National SWHPN Conference in Boston in March. She received the award for Best Poster for Research.

Emily Browning, MSW, LCSW, ACHP-SW

Buy your tickets online at www.vnaphilly.org
A Deficiency Free Survey

A Note of Gratitude to VNA Staff for a Job Well Done!

This month we had our Medicare Licensure Survey for Home Health. Dawn King, SVP for Home Health and her team are to be congratulated on a deficiency free survey. This is a major accomplishment and well deserved. Please take a moment to read the following announcement sent to our staff this afternoon. Thank you to all of the Board members for your continuing support of our program. This is the VNA Difference.

We are pleased to announce a deficiency free Medicare State and Federal Survey!

Quotes from the Surveyors:

"It is evident that you provide excellent care at the VNA"

"It was the best PT visit I have ever been on"

"Your nurse handled a patient complaint with ease, she was amazing"

"The nurse was very caring during the visit"

"The HR department had the best records that we have encountered"

A special shout out to:

- **Our Field Team that accompanied the Surveyors in the patient homes:** Tanya, Yorlennis, Nancy, Hillary, Bill, Jeanne and Diane for spending their visit time with the surveyors, performing excellent care to our patients, mastering infection control and ensuring their patients were informed! Great work team!

- **Excellent Documenters:** Outstanding documentation from Delisha, Yorlennis, Dominique, Diane, Loretta, Grace, Ralph, Bill, Nasira, Roxana, Comfort, Jonas, Chris S., Toni, Tanya, Jeanne K, Hilary, Nancy, Kristine, and Peggy.

- **IT Department:** Emily for assisting with reports and finding forms those were difficult to find in McKesson! Brian for keeping the network up and not letting it fail! Tara and Gary for getting the computers and passwords for the surveyors to utilize and saving us trees by ensuring that our survey could be performed electronically!

- **Education Department:** Wendy and Tammy who went above and beyond to assist from helping us find charts to escorting the surveyors, and in helping the surveyors navigate McKesson. They were amazing and truly helped to ensure that the survey went smoothly!

- **New Orientees:** Benyam, Danielle, and Stephanie for being so patient and understanding during the survey process and ensuring that the surveyors shared Wendy's expertise in our record review.

- **Quality Department:** Jennifer and Beverly for diligently reviewing charts, managing our programs, and keeping a excellent record of our committees.

- **Orders Tracking:** Donna and Joe for getting the orders out on -time and getting orders signed for charts that were being audited!

- **Facilities:** Rob, Lori and Luis for their excellent communication and keeping us on track!

- **Hospice:** For keeping us focused with all your well wishes and support.

- **Home Health:** Arthina, Janet, Lynette, Stephanie, Tamara, Jennifer, Wanda, and Tom for ensuring that the patients are seen on time and that their care needs are met!

- **Our Amazing Patient Care Managers:** Beth, Mary Ellen, Henrietta, Kathleen, Teresa, and Debra for their dedication to their teams, hard work in organizing the home visits and identifying charts for review.

- **Human Resources:** Lisa Barker for spending her time with the surveyor to review all the files and Cynthia Browne-Harris for creating active employee listings.

- Each and everyone else from the field to the marketing team to intake to medical records to billing and beyond.

And the entire executive team for their continuous support throughout the last several days to ensure that every department had what they needed to manage through our state survey.

Deficiency free is no easy task. It is a reflection of the dedication and consistency of quality and compassion of this team.
On Friday, April 27th at 1:30 pm, a 20-year US Army veteran will finally be laid to rest properly with military honors at the Whitemarsh Memorial Park in Ambler, PA.

This veteran was never our patient or ever been in our care, but when our colleague (and US Marine for eight years), Bob Haley, found out this veteran’s ashes had gone unclaimed for two years and were shelved in a nursing home, he went into action.

Some years ago, VNA Philadelphia received four cemetery plots at the memorial park as a donation. Was all of the paperwork in order? Could we use the plots for the veteran’s interment? Our Agency checked out all of the details with Whitemarsh Memorial Park and yes, everything was verified. When they heard the circumstances surrounding this gentleman, they waived all fees associated with a burial. They said they were “honored and proud” to be part of this special occasion.

VNA Philadelphia has arranged a fitting ceremony for this veteran who has served our country, including a Color Guard, a military escort, and invitations to attend are being extended throughout our community. One of our own chaplains will lead the ceremony. We’re doing this because it’s the right thing to do.

Our commitment to taking care of veterans is part of our identity. We have home health and hospice programs specifically dedicated to serving our veterans and their families.

For more details about this ceremony or any additional information on the care we provide to veterans, call our Veterans Liaison, Bob Haley, at (610)570-9808 or email him at rhaley@vnaphilly.org.

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**VNA Philadelphia**

**2018 Calendar of Events**

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| May 4    | Women’s Initiative Gathering - VNA Philadelphia |
| May 17   | 2018 Caring Award Celebration
         | College of Physicians                   |
| June 3   | Inaugural Jazz Brunch and Silent Auction
         | Trolley Car Café                        |
| June 8   | Summer VNA Newsletter Vital Signs Mails |
| June 11  | VNA Employee Campaign Kick Off          |
| June 16  | Community Celebration of Life & Eighth Annual Butterfly Release
         | VNA Philadelphia - Falls Center         |
Look inside for all the news!

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Contact Us

For more information on our services please call:

215-473-7600
215-473-0772

Or visit us on the web at www.vnaphilly.org.

To make a donation, please contact:

Maureen Murphy
Sr. VP for Development and Communication

215-581-2006
mmurphy@vnaphilly.org

or www.vnaphilly.org to make a donation online. Click Donate Now.

VNA Philadelphia Vital Signs…
Our Quarterly Newsletter

VNA Philadelphia.  The right care. Right now.

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