Hello VNA Family,

We’ve had a busy year. Our clinicians have provided over 222,000 visits to 8,500 patients in our Home Health, Palliative, and Hospice Care programs. They have traveled an incredible 520,000 miles in five counties to bring their compassionate care to our patients and their families.

In 2018, we commemorated the 25th anniversary of our Hospice program, honored Jeff and Sandy Brown of ShopRite at our Caring Award fundraising dinner, hosted a beautiful Butterfly Release and Community Celebration of Life, implemented a telehealth initiative, celebrated our volunteers with a special dinner, and came through our Medicare Licensure Survey for Home Health with no deficiencies. We also upgraded our Electronic Medical Record switching to a new software product called Home Care Home Base, which we’ll implement early in 2019. In addition, this year, we launched a successful Nurse Residency Program, where we hire new nursing school graduates and give them an individually designed orientation and training program for six months.

While we’re pleased with our accomplishments, we have much more that we want to do. And we can’t wait to keep going even stronger. Our mission is to provide comprehensive home health, palliative, and end-of-life care of the highest quality to all people regardless of their ability to pay. But our vision is to be the number one agency in Philadelphia by every measure. We strive to be the care provider of choice for our patients and our referral sources, the employer of choice for our team members, and the partner of choice for every other agency, company, and organization in our community.

We’ve been an integral part of this community since 1886. We serve 122 different zip codes, we know every neighborhood, and we take care of the whole person and not just the disease state of a patient, we keep our focus on the community. We work with partner agencies to provide food to our patients who don’t have enough. We team with agencies that can make home repairs when a patient is in need. We cherish the vital role we play in our community. We look forward to serving you in 2019.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year!

Woody
President, CEO
What Do You Think the Inside of a Nurse’s Trunk Looks Like?

All of our clinicians, home-health and home-hospice nurses in particular, carry a large variety of items with them at all times. Their cars are like little mini, traveling medical offices because they never know what they might need for any given patient!

Our nurses are famous for keeping very neat car trunks… because they have to!

Home-health and home-hospice clinicians need to store their equipment and supplies in their vehicle in a way that they are protected and will prevent infection to our patients. They make sure the items are stored in a well-ventilated area that provides protection from dust, moisture, temperature and humidity.

The items are stored in a clean, covered container – preferably plastic. One marked “Clean” and one marked “Dirty.”

Expiration dates are checked frequently and items that are passed their expiration date are replaced immediately.

Clinicians’ field bags are protected at all times, too, by placing them in a plastic container or on a drape (newspaper, towel, paper/plastic bag). They are wiped down with alcohol or antibacterial wipes every single time they are used.

When clinicians are carrying contaminated material, such as a used needle or dirty wound supplies the items are placed in the “Dirty” container to transport them back to the VNA to be disposed of properly in dedicated red containers that receive special handling for disposal from our facilities team.

Trunk inspection, at VNA Philadelphia, is conducted at least yearly by our Quality Assurance department. Our Agency in particular is dedicated to the highest quality of cleanliness standards in the industry.

What kinds of things might be found in a clinician’s trunk? A field bag, extra supplies like paper towels, drapes, liquid soap, hand sanitizer, 4x4s, ABDS (abdominal dressings) for surgical wounds, a Foley catheter, consent booklets, trash bags, a spill kit, tape, adhesive bandages, a camera, extra batteries, a scale, tape measurers, hand sanitizer, towelettes, extra gloves, soap, gauze, a medical gown, trash bags, a white suit in case a home has an issue with bed bugs.

Our clinicians are always prepared to say to a patient or a family member: “I’ve got that in my trunk, I’ll be right back!” Gina Newman, RN, likes to say.

For our clinicians’ own families, well, it’s something they just learn to live with and have gotten used to just kind of sliding stuff over when they need to load their own gear into the family car’s trunk!
Celebration Lunch

Lead Chaplain, The Reverend Donna Geiger, gave this blessing over the celebration lunch VNA Philadelphia employees enjoyed together after a successful move of offices. “Today we give thanks for US. We are a remarkable VNA family with many talents and abilities. We faced the challenge of the disruption of a move. May this change lead the way to a unified organization where we rely on the wisdom of others for success. Let us together celebrate our new surrounding as we continue to work and play with a togetherness of joy in our hearts. And, may this meal be shared with laughter and love. May we always be mindful of the needs of others. Blessings.”

The Facilities Crew.

SVPs Jill Morrisroe, Amy Sloan and Dawn King are ready to serve their colleagues.

SVP of Hospice, Renee Savarese and SVP of Home Health, Dawn

Therapists Pam Lubker, PT and Hilary Oser, OT
Another VNA Philadelphia Difference:
Our Veterans Initiative

We have a very long and proud tradition of our special initiatives that we have in place for our patients who have served in the military. We have a special spot in our heart for those who have served our country.

We also have a large number of veterans in our care. When our Nurse Practitioner Aileen heard a story from one of our veterans about having served in the Army during World War II and being sent to North Africa and Italy it sounded very familiar to her. Right away, she remembered another gentleman who is her patient who told the very same story!

Our team went into action! Some of our chaplains, social workers, nurses, and our veterans’ liaison worked quickly to arrange a meeting for the two veterans and their families. Just in time for Veterans Day, the gentlemen met for the first time. In a side by side comparison of their military paperwork, you could see that they indeed both served in the same places at the same time between 1942 and 1945! Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy…where one served as a cook and the other served as a combat medic. Both received good conduct medals and both received Bronze Stars. Both returned to Philadelphia and started careers and families.

It was an honor for all of us present to be in the company of these two men on such a meaningful occasion.

Special thanks to our friends at the Masonic Village in Lafayette Hill, where one of the veterans resides, for hosting us.

One of the veterans still has his compass from his days in the service.

Our Veterans’ Liaison, Bob Haley (right), with Chanel Santiago our friend from the VA.

The VNA Philadelphia Team, Masonic Village Staff, a PA State Representative, and families of the Veterans celebrated!

The first handshake between the two men.
An Update on Our New Residency Program!

In our last edition, we told you about our very successful, new, nurse-residency program. We are pleased to announce that we have expanded it to include our Therapy Program! Our newest member of the Residency Team is Mitchell Benyon, MS, OT/L. Mitchell says “he loves home-health care because you don’t have to simulate anything, you are right there in their own environment with the patient.”

The residency program is a wonderful opportunity for both VNA Philadelphia and the new clinician. We both benefit from the six-month-long program!

Social Work Department Breakfast

To celebrate their move from the 6th Floor to the 5th, our Social Workers and Chaplains hosted an Open House for all employees.

Chaplains Ron Kinsey and Brian Bower at the breakfast hosted to celebrate the office move.

Five of our Hospice Social Workers

Debbie Garonski, Terry Schoppet and Dominique Scott
Testimonials

To the Staff of the VNA, We are so grateful for the time and care that you gave my aunt in her time of need. She received such good care that we will never forget. She enjoyed laughing and talking with all who came to see her. You made the last stages of her life very comfortable and this is something that we will never forget.

Dear Terry, Tanisha, Andy, Tiffany, Rhonda, Brian, Tahara & Christy (who showed extreme kindness towards Bill) just before he passed. Your support was very appreciated and for those I missed, may god keep you all in his care.

Words cannot express how grateful we are that during this difficult time we had so many people showing us an abundance of kindness and support. You helped my grandfather be more comfortable and feel loved. You are great at what you do and I hope more and more people can see that. We wish you the best and we will always remember you.

To all the Hospice team who comforted my brother, thank you all for your comforting care, words from your hearts. I commend all of you for what you do!!! Thank you again.

Thank you so much for the comfort and care you gave my husband and our Dad at the VNA Hospice. You are the Best.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you did to make life just a little nicer during our time of bereavement and caring for our mother.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel in our hearts for the loving care each and everyone of the staff there at the VNA showed by brother. Thank you so much.

This is a letter of gratitude. We thank God for you.

My family wishes to thank you so much for every kindness your team extended to our mother. Any time I needed information or assistance, it was promptly made available. During my mother’s critical times your services were amazingly flawless. I, myself, am “waiting to exhale”. I give all of you a ‘Bravo” thanking how hard on a day to day basis it is to keep in prospect that compassion in really an asset to the profession. Your services are beneficial to the families as well as the patient. Again I applaud you for you true professional efforts.

Stephanie, Zac, Karen and all of you who cared for Jack during his illness. I am so very grateful to you all. You are certainly a special group of people. God Bless You!
**Community Partners**

**Philabundance**

VNA Philadelphia is delighted to join forces with Philabundance to help get food to hungry patients.

Philabundance is the Delaware Valley’s largest hunger relief organization, acquiring, rescuing and distributing food to help feed those in need, and advocating for policies that increase food access. The mission of Philabundance is to drive hunger from our communities today and end hunger forever. [www.philabundance.org](http://www.philabundance.org)

We’re finalizing all of the details on how to make this happen, so stay tuned for more information!

**JDog Junk Removal & Hauling**

We’re also very pleased to partner with JDog Junk Removal and Hauling! We have a larger than average number of veterans who are our patients. And some of them might need some help around the house.

JDog Junk Removal & Hauling offers junk removal and hauling services for residential and commercial customers. Our local business operators are Veterans and Military family members. They ensure that our services are delivered the Military way – with Respect, Integrity, and Trust.

This year, we worked with JDog and collected items for the Toys for Tots campaign!

**Wawa**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Wawa Foundation, we were able to offer iRest Therapy to our patients who are military veterans and might be dealing with PTSD.

Therapist Sara Erlbaum met with a group of veterans at the Mercy LIFE West Philadelphia who were suggested by their Chaplain, Le’Roi Gill, as people who could benefit from the gentle therapy.

Sara led the veterans to find their “Inner Resource,” a term she uses to mean a tool to use to help feel secure, in control, and at ease with life experiences. Erlbaum says, “Your inner resources is a refuge within you. It is already hard-wired into your brain to help you counteract negative situations.”
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A publication of VNA Philadelphia
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VNA Philadelphia Vital Signs… Our Quarterly Newsletter