Hello VNA Family,

What a start to 2020. As a healthcare agency, we are committed to providing our patients, staff and community thorough information and doing all that we can for our patients and our staff in this time of uncertainty. You are our priority. To our nurses, doctors, therapists, social workers, home health aids, and chaplains who are on the front lines -- you are our heroes.

We are monitoring the rapidly evolving information surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and adhering to guidelines from government officials. This includes regular meetings with the Department of Health and CDC. In addition, we have implemented a daily phone-call for our staff which is led by our Quality Assurance Director, Tammy Berry.

Telehealth — the use of digital information and communication devices to access and manage healthcare – has emerged as one of the programs leading the way during this global pandemic. To this end, VNA is using our telehealth program known as HELM (Health Education and Lifestyle Monitoring) to manage many of our home health patients. In fact, our telehealth program was one of the first in the state to release COVID-19 education and pre-screening.

The COVID-19 epidemic is bringing much of Philadelphia to a halt: hospitals are expected to become overloaded; SEPTA is operating on a reduced schedule and the Governor has shut down non-essential businesses. VNA Philadelphia, the oldest home health care agency in the region, has been a leader in community health since 1886. In the midst of the coronavirus epidemic, VNA Philadelphia staff is continuing to provide care to our patients, the majority of whom are “at risk.” You are our priority.

Sincerely,

Elwood “Woody” Hungarter
President, CEO
“The number of people that need food is unbelievable and very sad,” says Elwood Hungarter, President and CEO of VNA Philadelphia. “Our Food Pantry is a great thing, but there is so much more to do,” laments Hungarter.

Craig Hindman, Director of Population Health, recently participated in a shelf-stable training which would allow for the expansion of VNA Philadelphia’s Food Pantry to shelf stable foods. In fact, VNA will participate in the virtual Race Against Hunger anytime from April 17th - 27th to raise awareness of the critical need for community food programs and to raise funds to continue to address food insecurity for our patients in and around Philadelphia County. (Fundraising will be open til May 30th!)

To support VNA Philadelphia and the Race Against Hunger or start your own team, visit: www.vnaphilly.org/upcoming-events or www.phillyhungerrace.com/teams & select VNA Philadelphia.
VNA Philadelphia has an amazing team of 50 hospice volunteers who fill many supportive roles. We have volunteers who visit hospice patients where they reside, whether that is at home, in skilled nursing facilities or in our 15-bed inpatient unit. Volunteers read books, sing, play games, engage in life review, or simply sit quietly; offering a supportive presence. These visits often serve a dual purpose of companionship and providing respite support for caregivers. Our inpatient unit volunteers each take two-hour shifts to spend time with patients while they stay with us. Years ago, one of the inpatient unit volunteers came up with the great idea to come in to our inpatient unit and bake cookies for the patients and their families who are visiting. Because of this, the wonderful smell of freshly baked cookies fills the unit every Thursday afternoon.

On Thursday and Sunday mornings, singers from Threshold Choir share their incredible talent and sing to patients in our inpatient unit. They have also joined us for several special events.

Our certified pet therapy volunteers regularly visit patients in our inpatient unit and skilled nursing facilities, offering comfort to patients. Our furry friends often take time to stop by the office to visit staff for a bit to say hello and it really has a way of brightening your day. You can’t help but smile when you see them happily walking the halls!

We are also fortunate enough to have volunteers that come into the office weekly to help with administrative tasks such as data entry, mailings, special events and more. Each and every volunteer is an essential part of VNA, and as we approach Volunteer Appreciation Week, we would like to extend a warm heartfelt thank you to all of our incredible volunteers. Thank you for giving the precious gift of time to our patients, their caregivers and our fellow staff members… for all that you do, we are ever so grateful.

VNA Philadelphia currently has 150 patients receiving telehealth services.

As telemedicine has rapidly become the first line of defense against the coronavirus, there has been an increase in demand. Recently 50 additional units were ordered from Health Recovery Solutions (HRS) – VNA Philadelphia’s telehealth provider -- and there is already a waiting list for these units.
VNA INTRODUCES

THERAPEUTIC VIRTUAL REALITY

VNA Philadelphia Introduces “VR Journeys” & Therapeutic Intervention using virtual reality to our IPU staff! After receiving a $25,000 grant from the Independence Foundation, VNA has virtual reality headsets to use with hospice patients. Recent studies have found that technologies like these can reduce symptoms like pain and anxiety.

YOU MATTER, BE COUNTED! 2020 Census

VNA is doing outreach to approximately 800 faith-based leaders in and around Philadelphia. One of the churches that was reached out to was Berean Baptist Church. Sister Veronica Stovall came to pick up additional brochures to distribute to her congregation to ensure that they participate in the census. Sister Stovall had two relatives who died on our inpatient unit. “We “couldn’t ask for a better place; it made a difficult time better. The care and concern that the nurses showed was phenomenal.”

Our CEO Elwood Hungarter; Renee Saverese, Senior VP of Hospice; Brian Sharkoski, Chief Information Officer and staff trying out the new VR device!

VNA Philly's "2020 Census Outreach" project, "YOU MATTER, BE COUNTED" will be instrumental in helping Pennsylvania achieve a more accurate and reliable count of its residents.

More information @ http://www.vnaphilly.org
NBC reports on VNA and COVID-19

NBC interviews Tammy Berry, Director of QAPI for Home Health & Hospice, and Teresa Quinn, HELM (telehealth) Program Coordinator, regarding measures VNA patients and staff are taking to remain healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak.

VNA Hospice Liaison Laura Barry speaking on the importance of palliative care and hospice.

Warming the Hearts of our employees with coffee, pastries, and appreciation in honor of Valentines Day!

National Women's Conference

VNA Philadelphia staff hosted a workshop at the 67th National Women's Conference this week on the sensitive subject of end of life & “Living & Learning to Let Go.” Pictured are Donna Geiger, Chaplain; LaVonna May and Joanna Vanore.
Dawn King with the Philadelphia City Sheriff’s Department delivering holiday cheer to a patient’s family.

The annual National Go Red Day unites millions of people for a common goal: the eradication of heart disease and stroke. The nation — and VNA Philadelphia — came together “igniting a wave of red coast to coast.”

THANKFUL to BlackTree Healthcare Consulting, LLC for donations & volunteers to provide our patient families with holiday meals.

Celebrating Black History month!
The 10th Annual Butterfly Release & Community Celebration of Life honors our loved ones who have passed away in VNA Philadelphia's hospice program by releasing hundreds of butterflies as a universal symbol of hope. Please join us for this FREE Community event!

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020
11AM-2PM
THE CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY
4100 CHAMOUNIX DRIVE
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19131

QUESTIONS?
CALL EMILY CODER @ 215.581.2006
WWW.VNAPHILLY.ORG

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