

Community Nurses Home Health Messenger

HOME HEALTH • HOSPICE • SUPPORT SERVICES • ADULT DAY

October 2012



Happy Anniversary Community Nurses!

October 1, 2012

83 Years of Service

Although the mode of transportation has certainly changed, our dedication to providing quality services to each and every individual in our care remains the same.

We gratefully acknowledge our staff, board of directors, volunteers, and all who continue to support the Community Nurses in our health care mission.

National Home Care & Hospice Month highlights the benefits of being cared for at home

On a daily basis, the staff of Community Nurses, along with thousands of home care agencies across the nation, provide remarkable care in people's homes. During November, we celebrate National Home Care & Hospice Month and offer our sincere gratitude to these heroes of home care!

As our country's population continues to age and the cost of health care continues to be a major challenge, it is our pleasure to represent home care, hospice and private duty services.

Throughout our 83 years of service our agency has seen vast changes in the health care industry. Today, with a growing trend toward reduced hospital stays, home care is gaining additional attention as an option for care. Not only does home care offer a home-based long term care option that patients prefer, but it is also cost effective. Home care has stood the test of time as one of our most valuable health care resources.

As a premier provider of home care services in our area, the Community Nurses and our dedicated team of compassionate caregivers remain committed to providing you with comprehensive services to meet the needs of you and your family.

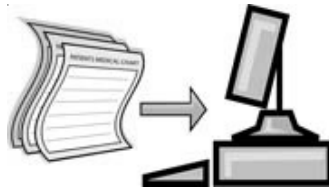
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Electronic Medical Records

Mean Better Health Care for You

Healthcare providers no longer need to rely on a paper trail to provide comprehensive healthcare. They can work with data in a centralized location to make faster and more accurate diagnoses and treatment plans. Just like other record keeping, moving a patient's medical records from paper filing systems to computers creates greater efficiencies for patients and their providers, as well as health payment systems like Medicare and your insurance company.



Electronic medical records (EMR) have many great benefits. Here's just a few...

- Your health information is always up-to-date.
- Information is accessible to your nurses and health care providers while they are caring for you in your home.
- EMR's allow for improved accuracy, legibility, and completeness. With EMR there is less possibility for medical errors and improved quality and safety.
- Allergies and adverse drug reactions are prominently displayed.
- Your records are much more secure than a paper record. Passwords control access to your records and only those who need to know your information may access your record.

Rehospitalization: what is it and how does it affect you?

For most patients who leave the hospital the last thing they want to do is return anytime soon. Yet, you have probably known any number of people who have experienced an unplanned readmission to a hospital, or "rehospitalization", after a previous hospital stay. Avoidable hospital readmissions are calculated to cost CMS (The Centers for Medicare Services) \$17.4 billion per year. Hospital readmissions are both common and costly. In most situations, hospitalization is medically necessary and appropriate. But many readmissions and ER visits can be prevented.

Reductions in hospital readmissions have been identified as a source for reducing Medicare spending while improving the quality of patient care. Medicare has placed a strong emphasis on proactive, preventive and personalized care. Health care providers – hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitations centers, and home health agencies – are partnering in a collaborative effort to reduce or prevent rehospitalizations. The goal is to establish a safe and stable environment for patients after they are discharged to a new setting.

The Community Nurses have implemented many strategies that promote a seamless transition from the hospital or nursing home to home health care. Here are just a few of the many measures our Agency has in place.

√ **Medication Reconciliation** is our #1 priority. 30% of all hospitalizations and 45% of all readmissions for the elderly are associated with medication mismanagement. Our nurse reconciles the medications between the physician's orders, hospital discharge orders, the medications in the home and medications the patient is taking. If there are questions, the nurse will call and clarify the orders with the MD. The nurse will review the medications with the patient, set up a med minder if needed, and teach the patient what the medications are being taken for and the side effects, and check if there are any drug to drug interactions.

√ **"Call Us First"** Community Nurses has a nurse available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We instruct our patients to "Call us First" if they have questions about their health issues. On admission we provide a "Call Us First" informational tool that directs the patient, based on their symptoms, when to call our nurses, and when to call 911.

√ **Telehealth** monitors are installed in the homes of those patients that would benefit from close monitoring of their vital signs. Hypertension, CHF, COPD and other respiratory diagnoses are some of the health issues that can be trended using telehealth. Telehealth assists in identifying a need for interventions and extra home visits that can help avoid a hospital admission.

Together We Serve: Community Nurses and Clergy reach out to help families

Elk County faith leaders and Community Nurses staff recently met over lunch to discuss how they can work together to ensure that those facing serious illness can live with dignity and their loved ones can get the support they need. The theme of the luncheon, *Together We Serve: Physical and Spiritual Comfort for the Seriously Ill*, brought together the common mission of providing comfort and care for people in need.

Our spiritual care communities play a major role in helping those who struggle with life limiting illnesses. Through their ministry, faith leaders often face challenges in providing care and support for people dealing with serious illness, caregiving needs, the end of life, and grief after loss. These same challenges are also experienced by the Community Nurses as they care for patients and families in the community.

Clergy luncheons will be scheduled throughout the three county area to continue the dialog on how to reach out together to connect people with valuable community resources.

Quilt squares help grieving kids piece together beautiful memories

What a difference a day makes! A grant from Women Who Care helped extend Camp Flutterbye, our summer grief camp for kids and teens, to a two-day event. The extra time spent at camp greatly added to the benefit the children gained from this healing experience.

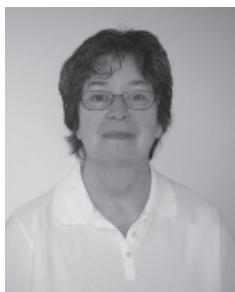
During the camp each child added their personal touch to a quilt square imprinted with a photo of their loved one. The beautiful result is now hanging on our office wall just outside the room where the children gather for monthly bereavement support group meetings.



On behalf of the campers and the Community Nurses, **THANK YOU** to our talented volunteer quilters who shared their time and talent to make this beautiful memory!

The Camp Flutterbye Quilt

Spotlight on our new employees - welcome!



Kathleen Ford,
Home Health Aide



Jamie Ezzolo,
Scheduler/Medical
Records Clerk



Jacquelyn Gerg,
Speech Language
Pathologist



Nicole Komenda, RN



Lisa Vavala, RN



Kelli Grassi,
Home Care Coordinator



Colleen White,
Occupational Therapist

Where do I go from here ?

Ask yourself: Have you...

- ◆ Been hospitalized several times in the last 6 months?
- ◆ Been struggling with a serious illness?
- ◆ Been told that tests and treatments are no longer benefiting you?
- ◆ Expressed the desire to enjoy life the way YOU want to and remain in comfort?

Have the conversation. Talk to your doctor, talk to your family, talk to yourself.

When you realize that all the hospitalizations and treatments you have been going through are no longer benefiting you, you may find yourself at the “where do I go from here” stage. It’s time to talk with your doctor and your family about your wishes for end-of-life care and know your options.

Take some time to think about what you want. Have a conversation with yourself. Consider questions like... *“This is October. If I thought I would die six months from now, in April, where do I want to spend my days and nights, both now and as my illness progresses? What do I want to be doing, and who do I want to be with? Is it important for me to not have a lot of pain? Is there someone to help my family care for me in my own home? Will there be professionals there to guide and comfort my family?”*

Sure it’s a little scary. But you do have choices. You are in the driver’s seat. Hospice is not about giving up. It’s about giving in to comfort, control, dignity and quality of life. And contrary to what some mistakenly believe, hospice is not about just two weeks of care at the end of life - it’s about months of care and support that help you and your family through the many stages you will experience. Patients who choose hospice care earlier in their life limiting illness often live better, and longer, than those who do not choose hospice.

The goal of end-of-life care is for you to live well, in a way that is meaningful to you, for as long as you live. Be sure to have that conversation - it will be a gift to you and your family.

Considering Adult Day? Don’t miss this free trial offer!

Many people provide care for an older adult in their family who is no longer able to stay alone during the day. Families often find the daily demands of caregiving to be extremely stressful. Community Nurses Adult Day Services offers a solution for these families. For a limited time, the Community Nurses are inviting individuals to try their Adult Day Services program for free.

The Adult Day facility located at 625 Maurus Street in St. Marys offers a daytime program for older adults who can’t be left alone for long periods of time due to a physical impairment, the effects of aging, or a memory loss condition like Alzheimer’s. The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.



Summer student assistant, Taylor Frank, and Adult Day Coordinator, Linda Bankovich, LPN, assist Adult Day clients Bill and Kathryn with measuring out ingredients for baking.

Adult Day participants often thrive in the upbeat, supervised environment that features a home-like living room and pleasant surroundings. Families notice a change in their loved one after spending time at Adult Day. Feelings of isolation disappear and they seem happier when they return home after a day of interesting activities, good nutrition, and socialization. Adult Day is staffed by a nurse and aides who carefully plan activities, monitor health conditions, and provide personal care when needed.

For more about Adult Day and this special offer contact the Community Nurses at 781-8253.



*The Community Nurses Extend Our Sincere Appreciation for your
Memorial Donations and Contributions from 1/1/12 to 9/17/12*

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This memorial donation
 card can be mailed to:
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 757 Johnsonburg Road
 Suite 200
 St. Marys, PA 15857

Butterfly release

Despite an afternoon rain
 storm and threatening
 skies, 200 butterflies
 soared into the sky or
 paused to rest on hands
 and shoulders at the
 Community Nurses 4th
 Annual Butterfly Release



for Hospice. For the first time ever, the ceremony was moved indoors to the multi-purpose room at Pinecrest Manor. But when it came time to release the butterflies the rain cleared and the large crowd moved outdoors into the center courtyard to enjoy watching the flight of the butterflies as Dr. Paul Fehrenbach played Amazing Grace on his bagpipe. This always memorable event is a touching, beautiful way to remember both the living and deceased who have been a special part of our lives.

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Hospice volunteer “felt the pull” - loves her work

One volunteer tells about how she was actively looking for a way to serve the community when she came across information about volunteering for hospice. She remembers that it felt strange to read this particular news article because she had always felt fear and discomfort around illness and in particular, towards persons who were sick and dying. But something was drawing her to this service and to the organization.

The original seed of hospice work was planted about ten years ago with the death of her grandfather. They were very close and he died of cancer in her family’s home with all of their family gathered around. It was a very difficult time for her family, but the experience was also one of the most profound and beautiful events in her life.

Instead of shying away, she felt a strong pull toward this work and before she knew it, she was filling out an application to train as a Hospice Volunteer. Filling out that application changed her life and from that day forward, she has worked as a hospice volunteer serving many individuals who have died or are facing the end of life and she absolutely loves hospice work.

Volunteers in hospice find it personally gratifying, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally meaningful to assist those in need at a critical point in their lives. Some volunteers may have professional skills or specialized expertise, but most are just people who want to help their friends and neighbors and serve the community. Hospice is about making sure those with a life-threatening illness are surrounded by love and support.

Most Community Nurses hospice volunteers provide caregiver relief, patient companionship, help with chores, and provide supportive services for patients and families. Volunteers can also assist with hospice events like Camp Flutterbye, Memorial Services, Hospice Book Sale, and our Butterfly Release. Some provide in-office clerical support to the hospice team. Some give twenty hours a year, some give a hundred or more, according to their interests and availability. The personal rewards for a hospice volunteer are profound.

Hospice training and ongoing support are provided. If you feel the pull towards hospice service, give our volunteer coordinator a call at 781-4729. We have many special people in hospice - you could be one of them!
