

Community Nurses Home Health Messenger

HOME HEALTH • HOSPICE • SUPPORT SERVICES • ADULT DAY

Spring 2014

Medication Safety - A Top Priority

Community Nurses initiate electronic medication boxes

Medication errors are preventable. Yet mistakes in prescribing, dispensing and administering medications injure more than one million people in the United States each year. It is estimated that one in five adults take five or more different medications.

Helping patients avoid medication errors is a top priority at Community Nurses. A medication error from overdosing, missing doses, addiction, to forgetting to refill prescriptions, is a serious health concern among our senior citizens.

Due to a generous donor, we have been fortunate to secure a number of electronic units to assist patients with medication management. MedSmart is a programmable, locked pill dispenser for dispensing pills, reminding the user when medicine should be taken, and making the correct dose available. Once the patient takes his current dose, the unit automatically resets for his next reminder/alarm time.



Everyone can play an active role in reducing medication errors. The more you know about any medication you use, the better you can be sure you are using it properly.

What YOU can do...

Here's a few tips on medication safety that you should follow:

Create your own Medicine List.

List all prescriptions, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, vitamins, and herbal remedies you may use. Include the dosage, how often and what you take it for. Also list any medication allergies you may have. Keep a copy in your wallet and at home.

Take ALL medications to your appointments.

Gather prescriptions, OTC medicines, vitamins, and herbal remedies, and bring them to every doctor or emergency room visit along with a copy of the updated written record of your medications.

Ask before you add.

Add over-the-counter products to your medications only after talking to your doctor or pharmacist. Many OTC medications can cause adverse reactions or affect the way your prescriptions work.

Organize your medicines.

Use a reminder system like a daily or weekly pillbox, calendar or chart to help ensure that you take your medications as directed. Take medicines at the same time each day, as prescribed.

Learn about your medicines.

Read your medicine labels and package insert instructions that come with your prescription. If you have questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly if you experience any side effects listed on the package insert.

Take as directed.

Read and follow all precautions written on the labels on your prescription bottles. Take exactly as directed. Do not stop, decrease, or increase medications without consulting your doctor.

Tell all your doctors what the others have prescribed.

Many people see multiple doctors. Make sure the doctor taking care of you knows of any medications prescribed by other doctors or specialists.

**With sincere appreciation,
we bid farewell to our long-time
Hospice Medical Director,
Jayant Patankar, M.D.**



Jayant Patankar, M.D.

Community Nurses Hospice will certainly miss our friend and Hospice Medical Director, Dr. Jay Patankar, who helped guide our Hospice program for over 20 years. Dr. Patankar has relocated to Rockville, Maryland where he will work with the Hospice and Palliative Care program in an area hospital.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Patankar for his kindness and compassion while providing expert pain and symptom control for our hospice patients. He will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of working with him.

Introducing our newest employees



Dontrusa Ginther, LPN
Home Care Coordinator



Katie Hoy
Office Assistant

Dennis Parlavecchio, M.D., Hospice Medical Director



Dennis Parlavecchio, M.D.

We welcome Dr. Dennis Parlavecchio to our Hospice Interdisciplinary Team! The Hospice Medical Director is an active member of the team, and is responsible for the medical oversight of the regulatory and clinical aspects of the hospice. Along with the patient's attending physician, the Hospice Medical Director directs the plan of care for each patient. We look forward to working with Dr. Parlavecchio to serve our hospice patients and families!

Healthcare hero

In our last newsletter we invited you to recognize a Community Nurses "Healthcare Hero" who has made a lasting impression on you. Michael Fapore of Emporium wrote to us about Shauna Scutella, R.N., B.S.N., his home health nurse. "My hero Community Nurse is Shauna Scutella. She went the extra mile and made a positive impact on me. Thank you Shauna." Congratulations Shauna on making a difference in the lives of our patients!



Shauna Scutella,
R.N., B.S.N.

April 6-13 is National Volunteer Week

We extend our most sincere appreciation to our volunteers for Board Members, Hospice, Memory Bears, Camp Flutterbye, Book Sale, Senior Outreach, and the many other ways in which you assist our organization!

Just a note: Hospice volunteers are needed in Elk and McKean Counties. To find out more about what our volunteers do to give back to their communities in a special way call Ann at 781.4729.

National Social Work Month



During National Social Work Month we recognize the outstanding commitment of our social workers, Joanne Straub and Kristin Ronan. The official theme for Social Work Month in March 2014 is “All People Matter.”

Joanne and Kristin certainly live this theme, as they provide compassionate, professional social work services every day to patients and families dealing with many situations.



Joanne Straub, M.S.W.



Kristin Ronan

Social workers across the globe believe that all people have dignity and deserve respect. The goal of Social Work Month is to educate the public about how these values are essential to improving relationships within families, making social support systems more effective, and building stronger communities.

National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually in March by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and its Foundation.

At Community Nurses, our Nutrition Counselor, Char Snelick, works year-round to educate our patients on healthy nutrition habits. Getting the proper nutrients can help you heal faster and more efficiently from an injury or illness.



Char Snelick,
Dietetic Technician
Registrar

It is appropriate and fitting that March is National Nutrition Month, since it is in between winter and spring. Winter holiday gatherings have past and have left many of us with cherished memories and frequently unwanted weight gain!

Healthy eating and routine exercise are needed all year round; but many of us need a friendly reminder to get ourselves back on track. Be kind to your body and reacquaint yourself with healthy eating habits and fitness. Replace your unhealthy habits with smart health choices for a healthier body.

For some interesting and practical information on nutrition visit this website: www.eatright.org/public.

Retiring Board Members

Retiring Community Nurses Board Members Donna Holly and Ron King were presented with a plaque and gift in recognition of their contributions to the Agency. Pictured are Don Fleming, Board President, Donna Holly, Ron King, and Rebecca Nelson, Community Nurses CEO. Ms. Holly, a resident of Emporium, served on the Board for 16 years while Mr. King, from Johnsonburg, served for close to 10 years. The Community Nurses sincerely appreciate their guidance and leadership over the years. They will be missed!



Warning Signs Your Aging Parents Need Some Help

Are you concerned about your aging parents? You may have noticed that your once meticulous mother is no longer combing her hair regularly and her clothes look wrinkled. Or your dad is forgetting to pay bills. When you bring up the subject they say “Everything is fine. Don’t worry about it.” As people age, they fiercely guard their independence. They may keep secrets because they are embarrassed or worried about what is happening to them. Pay attention to signs indicating physical and mental changes that may be putting them at risk. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they need to go to an assisted living facility or nursing home. There are many ways to take the necessary steps to help them stay independent for as long as they can. When you visit your parents look for the following signs to identify areas that need attention:

Change in Personal Care Habits

Declining personal hygiene such as unkempt hair, dirty or lengthy nails, infrequent bathing, body or urine odor, unshaven, and wearing the same clothes over and over.

Living Conditions

Does their home look like it used to look? Do you notice a loss of interest in household chores, or the inability to do them? Dirty house, clutter, dirty laundry piling up, repairs needed?

Inability to Get Around. Look for bruises.

Difficulty getting up and down the stairs, unsteady walking on level ground, complaining of dizziness. Bruises that may indicate that a fall has occurred. Problems getting up from a seated position.

Memory Loss

Some memory loss is common as we age, and sometimes medications or health conditions contribute to memory loss. See the warning signs of Alzheimer’s in this issue to help determine what is normal and what is not.

Weight Loss

Losing weight without trying is a sign that something is wrong. This could be due to many factors including: difficulty cooking and preparing meals; loss of taste or smell; or underlying conditions like dementia, depression, cancer, malnutrition.

Nutrition

Not preparing meals, not eating at regular times, or missing them completely. Some signs are: poor selection of food in the house, lack of food in the house, spoiled food in the refrigerator.

Personality Change

A change in personality may signal depression, illness or a reaction to medications. If you are concerned, stay involved and encourage your loved one to visit a health care provider.

Road Safety

Pay attention to issues like increase in traffic violations, accidents, easily becoming lost in familiar areas, signs of deteriorating vision. If you or others are concerned that they are putting themselves or others at risk, it might be time for them to stop driving.

What can you do?

Let them know how much you care and want to make sure they are healthy and have a full and active life, preferably at home. Share your concerns - it may help them open up to you about their problems. Look for solutions together.

Some tangible ways to help:

- Offer to go to the doctor with them
 - Provide shopping assistance or meals
 - Help with home modification for safety & comfort
 - Enlist the support of Community Nurses home health, home support services or adult day
-

10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

1. **Memory loss.** Forgetting recently learned information is one of the most common early signs of dementia. A person begins to forget more often and is unable to recall the information later.

What's normal? Forgetting names or appointments occasionally.

2. **Difficulty performing familiar tasks.** People with dementia often find it hard to plan or complete everyday tasks. Individuals may lose track of the steps involved in preparing a meal, placing a phone call or playing a game.

What's normal? Occasionally forgetting why you came into a room or what you planned to say.

3. **Problems with language.** People with Alzheimer's disease often forget simple words or substitute unusual words, making their speech & writing hard to understand. They may be unable to find the toothbrush, for example, and instead ask for "that thing for my mouth".

What's normal? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

4. **Disorientation to time and place.** People with Alzheimer's disease can become lost in their own neighborhood, forget where they are and how they got there, and not know how to get back home.

What's normal? Forgetting the day of the week or where you were going.

5. **Poor or decreased judgment.** Those with Alzheimer's may dress inappropriately, wearing several layers on a warm day or little clothing in the cold. They may show poor judgment, like giving away large sums of money to telemarketers.

What's normal? Making a questionable or debatable decision from time to time.

6. **Problems with abstract thinking.** Those with Alzheimer's disease may have unusual difficulty performing complex mental tasks, like forgetting what numbers are for and how they should be used.

What's normal? Finding it challenging to balance a checkbook.

7. **Misplacing things.** A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places: an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

What's normal? Misplacing keys or a wallet temporarily.

8. **Changes in mood or behavior.** Someone with Alzheimer's disease may show rapid mood swings - from calm to tears to anger - for no apparent reason.

What's normal? Occasionally feeling sad or moody.

9. **Changes in personality.** The personalities of people with dementia can change dramatically. They may become extremely confused, suspicious, fearful or dependent on a family member.

What's normal? People's personalities do change somewhat with age.

10. **Loss of initiative.** A person with Alzheimer's disease may become very passive, sitting in front of the TV for hours, sleeping more than usual or not wanting to do usual activities.

What's normal? Sometimes feeling weary of work or social obligations.

If you or someone you know is experiencing Alzheimer symptoms, consult a doctor. The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are much more severe than simple memory lapses that many healthy people experience as they age. Early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other disorders causing dementia is an important step to getting appropriate treatment, care and support services.

Help for Caregivers

If you are a caregiver, take care of yourself so you can better care for your loved one. Take a break. Call on other family members to help. And remember, Community Nurses Home Support Services and our Adult Day Center are both great options to give you the break you need and provide excellent care for your loved one. Call our office at 834-1842.

2014 Used Book Sale for Hospice!

New location: St. Marys Area Middle School

Hundreds of area residents look forward to this annual hospice fundraiser event each year. Your book donations make this event possible. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

SALE DATES:

Dates for the sale will be June 5, 6, 7 with the new location this year at St. Marys Area Middle School cafeteria. Times will be announced.

COLLECTION DATES:

- √ Books will be accepted at the school on the listed days and times.
- √ Please pack books in boxes. Avoid very large boxes that are too heavy to lift when filled.
- √ Note: do not leave books at the school during other times.

Please bring your books on the earliest possible date to allow time for sorting and display. Book collection times:

Friday, May 30 from 1 - 5 p.m.

Saturday, May 31 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday, June 2 from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 3 from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.



Book Donation Guidelines

We welcome your donations of books and ask that you follow these guidelines:

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE ACCEPTABLE:

- Hardback & paperback books, including textbooks
- Children's books
- Current travel guides (no older than 2 years)
- Puzzles & games
- Music CD's, cassettes, records
- Audio books on tape or CD
- Art prints and posters
- Computer software

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE UNACCEPTABLE:

- Books that are damaged
- Books that have been stored where animals may have gotten into them
- Coverless, spineless or missing pages
- Damp, mildewed or food-stained
- Smelly books
- Encyclopedias
- Cassettes, CDs, video's that were home recorded
- Eight track tapes
- Weekly magazines

Book Sale Volunteers Needed!

We're looking for men and women to help collect, sort and organize the books for the sale!

If you have some time from May 30th through June 10 to help out, please call Ann at 781.4729 or email abauer@communitynurses.org.

Attention: Scouts or Youth Group --- Could you help on collection days listed above to carry books from cars into the school?

Your assistance is greatly appreciated - we couldn't do it without you!

Butterfly Release: August 3, 2014

Our annual Butterfly Release will be held at The Serenity Garden on Sunday, August 3 at 3:00 p.m. This beautiful event is held each year to help support our Hospice program. Butterflies are purchased by individuals in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one and then released during a memorable outdoor ceremony. Butterflies can be pre-ordered at any time from now until the week before the event for \$25 per name being honored. Order forms are available on our website, www.communitynurses.org.



Camp Flutterbye to be held in June

Our annual two-day grief camp for children and teens, K-12, will be held at The Pines in St. Marys in June. All children who have experienced a loss through death are invited to attend.

Meaningful, fun activities planned by bereavement professionals help participants understand that grieving the loss of a loved one is healthy and normal. For more information call 781-4719.



Save the date: please ride with us! BENEFIT RUN: June 7

All street-legal vehicles are invited to come and experience the best of the beautiful scenery of Cameron, Elk and McKean Counties on Saturday, June 7. This annual benefit run is sponsored by ABATE Endless Mountain and God's Country Chapters to benefit the Community Nurses. Gather your family and friends and ride your bikes, jeeps and cars to help support our Hospice program. Food, prizes and door prizes await at the end! Watch for more details in the coming months!

HFA educational program on April 23 *Helping Adolescents Cope With Loss*

- Make your reservation now by calling 781-4744
- No fee for program. CE credits available for a fee.
- Location: Elk Regional Education Center
- Time: 9 a.m. to noon

Community Nurses is pleased to sponsor the 2014 Hospice Foundation of America Living With Grief program: "Helping Adolescents Cope With Loss." This program, presented by a panel of experts in the field, is open to anyone in the community interested in learning more about this topic. The target audience is professionals such as clergy, counselors, nurses, nursing home administrators, social workers, case managers, psychologists, physicians, funeral directors, marriage and family therapists, caregivers, and those working with death, dying, grief or bereavement.

The program focuses on the issues adolescents face as they cope with loss.

Adolescence, from middle school years to emerging adulthood, is a significant developmental period during which adolescents form identity, independence, and intimacy. Illness and loss

profoundly influence these processes. Adolescent encounters with loss are likely to be traumatic - deaths by accident, suicide, and homicide. This program explores ways to assist adolescents as they cope with loss.

Call the Community Nurses at 781-4744 to register or to inquire about CE credits.

Do you have questions about what Community Nurses has to offer?
Visit us online at www.communitynurses.org
or like us on Facebook!

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New ultrasound equipment is benefiting patients

Through a grant from Women Who Care, Community Nurses recently obtained two portable, therapeutic ultrasound units for use by our Physical and Occupational Therapists who provide in-home therapy for our homebound patients of all ages. These patients have medical problems or other health-related conditions, illnesses or injuries that limit their ability to move and perform activities of daily living.

Therapeutic ultrasound is a method of stimulating the tissue beneath the skin's surface using very high frequency sound waves which cannot be heard by humans. Ultrasound can penetrate to the depth of most joint capsules, tendons and ligaments and has been proven effective in reducing pain, tenderness and swelling as well as increasing range of motion.



Kate Bauer & Shauna Ritter,
Community Nurses Physical
Therapists, demonstrate
ultrasound treatment

There are three primary benefits to therapeutic ultrasound:

1. The speeding up of the healing process from the increase in blood flow in the treated area
2. The decrease in pain from the reduction of swelling and edema
3. The gentle massage of muscle tendons and/or ligaments in the treated area because no strain is added and any scar tissue is softened

The use of therapeutic ultrasound will help Community Nurses reduce patient pain, improve patient mobility and strength, and aid in returning the patient to the activities of daily living more quickly.