

COMMUNITY FOCUS NEWS

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A Newsletter of Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk • Fall 2020



VNSHS AT YOUR SERVICE

As the first visiting nurse service in Suffolk County founded in 1952 and the first freestanding inpatient hospice founded in 2004, VNSHS is a trusted leader in healthcare. Healthcare has changed dramatically since we made our first house call nearly 70 years ago. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our healthcare system and people's health and way of life as never experienced before.

With meticulous infection control measures, personal protection equipment and ongoing COVID-19 training and testing for our clinicians, VNSHS quickly adapted to serve families facing any healthcare crisis, non-COVID as well as COVID related. There is a shift in the role of home care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, home care is recognized as an essential source of primary care in the community and a resource for education and professional guidance whether for a medical condition or to maintain a healthy life.

VNSHS brings a comprehensive range of services

skilled home nursing, palliative and hospice services • inpatient Hospice House • rehabilitative physical, occupational and speech therapy • wound and ostomy care • home health aide care • medical social work support • nutritional counseling and diabetic education • telehealth • community wellness programs

directly to our patient's homes to address their clinical, educational and psychosocial needs. We provide many services not mandated of home health care or hospice agencies because we know they decrease emergency room visits, hospitalization and readmission, improve medical outcomes and offer peace of mind to our patients and their families.

Every patient is offered a **Licensed Social Worker (LSW)** to provide professional counseling to help them and their families cope with the personal, emotional, financial and social issues that arise from illness or accident, as well as provide guidance applying for Medicaid.

Our **Registered Dietician Nutritionist (RDN)** develops nutritional counseling based on the patient's needs and effectiveness of a medically prescribed diet. Our RDN is also a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist who teaches patients diabetes self-management.

Telehealth allows VNSHS to continuously monitor patient vitals and symptoms which provides patients with a "virtual visit" with a VNSHS clinician so they may monitor and manage their healthcare, safely and easily from the comfort of their own home.

Our **Caring Hearts Home Health Aides** is a private pay solution offering personal care, meal preparation, light housekeeping, laundry, shopping, home management, companionship, assistance to maintain an exercise program and medication management when these services are no longer or not covered by insurance.

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HEART TO HEART

Dear Friend,



Linda Taylor, MA, BSN, RN
Chief Executive Officer

The generosity of donors enables VNSHS to provide quality healthcare to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Please consider making a gift at visitingnurseservice.org or in the enclosed envelope to help local families facing a healthcare crisis.

The last seven months have been a challenge to us all in so many different ways as we found ourselves so abruptly immersed in the COVID pandemic. At this point many of you have known others – family or friends - who have become ill themselves or sadly passed from this deadly virus. We have now learned together how to protect ourselves and each other to contain its spread, but also must recognize we are in this for the long haul.

As I reflect on the interactions we have had with each other whether among our own employees or with you in the community, I am sincerely gratified by the positive spirit and caring attitudes that prevail even as we have been stressed by the unpredictable course this experience has taken us. Thanks to our employees and volunteers who have been there throughout, adapting face to face visits with virtual visits or phone calls that have kept us connected and available to support you in the community we share.

As the New York incidence has remained at safe levels to allow cautious re-openings of businesses and schools, we continue to modify our own practices to ensure the safety of all because the threat of potential infection remains. VNSHS has ample supplies of PPE necessary to protect you and us as we acknowledge prevention to be our best defense even seven months into this pandemic that persists. Know that we remain here for you to assist with your healthcare needs at home whatever the medical issue as elective procedures resume and we return to a modified normal. While we are weary of limitations imposed by applying an abundance of caution to our everyday living, this is no time to let down our guard. We need to remain vigilant and thoughtful as we seek creative ways to adapt for the unpredictable long term, and not lose sight of our greatest source of support through personal interaction, whatever form it may have to take.

Stay strong, be safe and be well.



THANK YOU

With tee times 12 minutes apart, on course lunches, modified contests and course guidelines, the 16th Annual VNSHS Golf Classic on August 3rd at Indian Hills Country Club, safely brought golfers together to honor Healthcare Heroes while raising more than \$35,000 for Hospice House.





COMPASSIONATE CARE SINCE 1952

VNSHS AT YOUR SERVICE

Continued from page 1

Caring Hearts Aides are VNSHS employees, New York State Certified and supervised by a Registered Nurse.

VNSHS provides a **private pay transportation service** to and from medical appointments if a patient is not physically able to drive or does not have a caregiver who could do so. This service is provided by a VNSHS Home Health Aide who helps patients prepare for their appointment, assists them to the appointment, waits for them in the waiting room, helps carry bags and provides comforting companionship.



Influenza vaccinations administered by a VNSHS Registered Nurse are available for our homebound patients and members of the community at our Northport office by appointment only. We bill traditional Medicare and traditional Medicaid or provide a receipt for the \$35 fee to submit to private insurance, your HMO or Advantage Plan for reimbursement. Please call 631.261.7200 to schedule your flu shot.

Acupuncture is available to our hospice patients for pain control and symptom management of anxiety, depression, difficulty breathing and swallowing, constipation and diarrhea, dizziness, nausea and

vomiting, neuropathy, paresthesia, contracted limbs and tremors.

For hospice patients who do not meet the criteria for inpatient hospice care, when it is believed that the caregiver would benefit from some rest from the daily care they provide or if they are required to travel, **inpatient respite care** at Hospice House is available. Medicare insurance covers respite lasting up to five days at a time.



Our VNSHS **Bereavement Counselor** and specially trained hospice volunteers offer support to those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. This program is currently available by phone and regardless of if a patient was in our care.

Should you or a loved one need home health care or hospice services, VNSHS stands ready to assist. We serve patients throughout Suffolk County in their own home, which may include senior or assisted living facilities. We also provide inpatient care at Hospice House which is available to patients who reside anywhere in the country.

Go to visitingnurseservice.org for more information on VNSHS services



NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY MONTH

October is National Physical Therapy month and an opportunity to raise awareness of how PT can improve and even save lives. VNSHS offers extensive rehabilitative therapy including outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy reimbursed under the Part B Medicare benefit. The advantage of VNSHS is that our therapy staff will see a patient in their home rather than a clinic or office. Our therapy staff is also trained to assess a patient's vitals to ensure the patient is medically stable to participate in therapeutic activities. The VNSHS therapy team coordinates findings with a patient's physicians should a higher level of care be needed.

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN HAVE PHYSICAL THERAPY AT HOME?

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Linda Taylor, MA, BSN, RN

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SUPPORT VIRTUAL PAWS FOR A CAUSE

Paws for a Cause has become a treasured tradition. Although we cannot be together for a parade as in the past, we hope this year's event will bring a smile as it brings us together virtually!

1. Register online, by phone at 631.261.7200 or by mailing a \$25 check payable to VNSHS, 505 Main Street, Northport, NY 11768.

Attn: Dog Walk. Sponsorships and tee signs are also available.

2. 100% of your \$25.00 registration fee benefits Hospice House.

All participants will be mailed a handmade dog bandana.

3. Walk your dog anytime, anywhere October 17 – 31, 2020.

4. Email a photo of your dog to info@visitingnurseservice.org. Photo not required to participate. Photos of dogs in Halloween costumes are welcome!

5. On November 3rd, visit

www.facebook.com/visitingnurseservicenorthport to

view our Virtual Paws for a Cause Parade of photos submitted and to see if you won a gift card.



REGISTER AT
VISITINGNURSESERVICE.ORG/GETINVOLVED
OR 631.261.7200

Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is a participating agency of
 The Townwide Fund of Huntington and the United Way of Long Island.



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