



# Visiting Nurse Matters

WINTER 2009 VISITING NURSE AND HOSPICE SERVICES VOLUME 1 NO. 2

## A 50-Year Journey of Compassion and Care



**ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**—Wayne Whelan, VNHS executive director, far left, and Robert D’Augustine, board chair, far right, thank Stephen Smith and Jean Moore for their dedication and support. Mr. Smith is a 15-year board member; Ms. Moore is a former executive director.



**FREEHOLDERS’ PROCLAMATION**—Linda Cushing, assistant director, Burlington County Office on Aging, presents a proclamation from the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, recognizing VNHS’ 50th anniversary of service to the community.

Visiting Nurse and Hospice Services (VNHS), which has provided home health care to residents of Burlington and Gloucester Counties since 1959, celebrated its 50th anniversary Oct. 1 with a luncheon at the Deerwood Country Club, Westampton. Jean Moore, former executive director, and Stephen Smith, a 15-year board member, were honored for their long-time commitment to the agency. VNHS also recognized employees with more than 15 years of service.

During the luncheon, the agency gratefully acknowledged the outpouring of community support that has sustained its mission over the years. Wayne Whelan, executive director, thanked the Burlington County Office on Aging, Gloucester County Division of Senior Services, the LeisureTown TOUCH

organization, Burlington County United Way, the Harriet Irick Nursing Foundation, Holy Cross High School and UMDNJ-Stratford for their long-time support and collaboration.

“As we considered how to celebrate our anniversary, it was clear that our success was the result of a shared commitment from our friends and partners in the community,” said Wayne Whelan, VNHS executive director. “We are indebted to each and every one for their exceptional support to the VNHS mission.”

The New Jersey Senate, the Burlington County and Gloucester County boards of freeholders, and the Governor all sent tributes in honor of the 50-year milestone.

# The Journey Begins

Visiting Nurse and Hospice Services sprang from the vision of Margaret Voss, RN, and Elizabeth Reagan, wives of Burlington County physicians, in response to a need for care and support for local families. In December 1959, after several years of trying to interest various groups in the county, they decided to "just go ahead and start it on a shoestring." They named the organization Visiting Homemaker Services of Burlington County. It began with a Mrs. Smith, a qualified social worker, and a handful of dedicated women who attended the first homemaker training session. Within the first six months, they provided necessary homemaker assistance for 35 families.



The anniversary observance captured VNHS' 50-year legacy of community service. This photo was published in local papers in the 1970s.

United Fund of Burlington County, the Moorestown Community Fund, the N. J. State Department of Health, and the Public Health Nursing Association of Burlington County provided generous support over the decades. As a result of this powerful community collaboration, the organization grew from 200 hours of service in January 1960 to more than 70,000 hours annually.

The homemakers themselves were the heart of the agency. In 1966, with the advent of Medicare, they were recognized under a new title: certified homemaker-home health aide. They were sent out with referrals from physicians and were supervised by visiting nurses.

"There wasn't a day that went by that you didn't feel like you helped someone."

*Jean Moore, former Executive Director*

Jean Moore, executive director (1970-1972) fondly remembers, "There wasn't a day that went by that you didn't feel like you helped someone ... even if it was just a conversation on the phone. Everyone helped out. Our board members would come into the office to do the payroll. Often my predecessor, Grace Walton, would go out and cook a meal for a family in need if she had no one to send."

VNHS history is rich in anecdotes that portray the need for its services. A young mother, scheduled for surgery, delayed entering the hospital because there was no one to care for her husband or family. An elderly man was held in the hospital following a successful operation because there was no one at home to care for him and no available bed in a nursing home. A mother woke up with a virus while her husband was away on a two-week sales trip, unable to care for her three pre-schoolers, one of whom was disabled. A young woman died in childbirth, leaving a husband with two small children to care for. VNHS came to the aid of these families and many more.

In 1976, VNHS received its first certificate of need (CN) from the state to provide home care services under Medicare and Medicaid for residents of Burlington County. The CN enabled the agency to expand its services to include nursing, therapy and social work. In 1981, VNHS received a CN in Gloucester County. Working closely with the state, county and community, the agency expanded critical safety-net services to their neighbors in need. In the 1990's nursing services and home health aide care were offered in ever greater numbers to meet the growing needs of the elderly.



# Embracing the Future

VNHS now provides home health aide assistance and respite services to area residents with the support of many community agencies, including the Gloucester County Division of Senior Services and Burlington County Office on Aging. In 2007, VNHS offered its first hospice services and, in 2008, merged with the largest VNA in the state, Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey (VNACJ). The affiliation with VNACJ enabled both organizations to expand their service areas and build on a tradition of compassionate care, expert clinical resources and innovative technology.

response system. In the community, VNHS continues to play an invaluable role, providing senior wellness services, participating in emergency response preparedness, and providing community health education and immunizations. Together, VNHS and the VNA of Central Jersey health system care for more than 106,000 individuals each year across New Jersey.

*For information about all VNHS services, patients and health care professionals may call VNHS at 800-792-8603.*



Helen Thompson and Robert Moore, second from right, of the Harriet Irick Nursing Foundation, were presented the VNHS Community Partner Award by Wayne Whelan and Stephen Smith. In early 2000, the Foundation donated \$300,000 to fund vital respite care and home health aide assistance, helping to maintain patients in their homes and prevent institutionalization.

Today, VNHS clinicians enter patient data into a hand-held, point-of-care device in the patient's home. Physicians have 24-hour access to their patients' information via a Physician Web Portal. Specialized services include intravenous home infusion and complex care; certified wound care; evidence-based disease and pain management; palliative care; telehealth in-home monitoring; and an emergency

The Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services has been an essential collaborator with VNHS in service to the senior community. At the anniversary celebration, Sheila Allen, care coordinator for the Department, accepted the VNHS Community Partner Award from Executive Director Wayne Whelan.

*Be part of our story...*

## Be a VNHS Volunteer

Be a companion for a patient or help out in the office. Partner with us to serve those in need. Opportunities in both Burlington and Gloucester counties.

*Please call Bonnie Mangle at 800-792-8603, ext. 2210.*



# Visiting Nurse and Hospice Services

an affiliate of VNA of Central Jersey

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



At the 50th Anniversary Celebration, VNHS recognized students and staff of Holy Cross High School, Delran. For the past twenty years students of the school have been VNHS community partners, creating holiday gift baskets for patients in need. Bonnie Mangle, second from right, director of special programs, and Wayne Whelan, executive director, thanked the students and their teacher, Sister Claudette, who administers the program. If you know of a VNHS patient in need of extra assistance and a gift basket, please call Ms. Mangle at 800-792-8603, ext. 2210. Please be sure to specify gift requests such as food baskets and personal care items.

## VNHS SERVICES In-home Services

- Community Health Nursing
- Certified Hospice Services
- Bereavement Counseling
- Palliative Care
- Home Health Aides
- Home Infusion/IV Therapy
- Medical Social Work
- Nutrition Counseling
- Rehabilitation Therapy
- Private Duty Services
  - Nursing
  - Live-in's
- Emergency Personal Response System
- Telehealth Program

## Community-based Programs

- Community Health Education
- Bereavement Counseling
- Senior Wellness
- Respite Care
- Speakers Bureau
- Volunteer Program

VNHS Matters is a publication of Visiting Nurse and Hospice Services, a voluntary organization serving Burlington, Gloucester and Camden counties.

Wayne Whelan, Executive Director Mary Ann Christopher, VNACJ President & CEO

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