

VNA Northwest, Inc.

Founded in 1928 by Dr. W. Bradford Walker

The Only Home Care Agency Serving All of Litchfield County

Meet Your Visiting Nurse

Nona Williams, RN, CHPN, WCC



Nona has been with VNA Northwest for one year, and has been a nurse for 25 years. She visits patients in the towns of **Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Sharon and Warren.**

Nona says she followed in her sister's footsteps and received her training at St. Francis School of Nursing in Hartford. She then spent several years working in the neonatal intensive care unit at John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington. Nona has experience in maternal and child health nursing, and has also worked in physicians' offices. In her hometown of Goshen, she has worked for several years at Goshen Community Care and Hospice. She is certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN), and the National

Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®). She says she loves serving the residents of northwest Connecticut. "I love the social aspect of being a visiting nurse, and really getting to know my patients, she says. "Once I know them, I feel like I'm better able to advocate for them," she adds. Nona and her husband have two teenage daughters. In her free time, she enjoys scrapbooking, photography, horseback riding, and watching her daughters participate in activities including soccer and dancing.

Malisa joined VNA Northwest in 1996 as a home health aide. She soon started nursing studies at Naugatuck Valley Community College. In the meantime, she and her husband Jon became the proud parents of two sons. While her boys were still young, Malisa managed to continue her studies and received her L.P.N. degree in 2008 from Kaynor Technical School. In addition to caring for patients **throughout our service area**, as well as meeting the demands of her busy household, she is currently enrolled in an online program so that she can reach her goal of becoming an R.N. Malisa says she has wanted to become a nurse since she was in the fourth grade, "though I didn't learn about Florence Nightingale until I was in nursing school!" In addition to home health care, she has had experience working in other settings, including a skilled nursing facility and a hospital. Recently, Malisa also became certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN).

As a longtime employee of VNA Northwest, she says she has had the opportunity to see the agency grow, expand and improve over the years. She says she enjoys



Malisa O'Neill, LPN, CHLPN

her work in homecare because, "I like the one-on-one relationships I'm able to develop with patients and their families. There are not as many time constraints as in a facility, and I can educate them, help them to adjust to their situations, and offer a human touch," she adds.

Malisa and her family live in Bethlehem, where they operate a dairy farm. The boys, now 14 and 10, are active in caring for the animals, as well as in scouting and sports. Malisa enjoys participating in activities with her family, and cooking for 4-H and Fire Department events. She also likes to quilt and bake.

North Canaan, Falls Village, Lakeville/Salisbury, Sharon & Winsted



Darlene Grant, RN, BGS, WCC

Darlene is case manager for patients in the northwest corner towns of **Falls Village, Lakeville/Salisbury, Norfolk, North Canaan, and Winsted**. She has been with VNA Northwest since 1999 — “long enough to care for the children of some of the senior citizens I’ve cared for!” she says.

Before deciding to be a nurse, Darlene wanted to be a go-go dancer, then, a horticulturist. Her mother, who was a dedicated nurse, greatly influenced her. “She always provided room and board for the elderly in our home, and that was a part of my life when I was growing up,” she says. Darlene started her career as a nurse’s aide, then went to St. Mary’s School of Nursing, became an L.P.N., and later received her R.N. and Bachelor’s of General Studies from the University of Connecticut. After that, she worked as a clinical supervisor and staff builder at Tendercare. Since joining the staff of VNA Northwest, she has earned advanced clinical certification from the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®) In addition to wound care, she has considerable experience in orthopedics.

Darlene is also well-versed in the many social services available to northwest Connecticut residents. She tells her patients, “Don’t be afraid to ask because there are a lot of services out there that can help you. My goal is to share what I’ve learned with patients and their families so they can keep their loved ones at home longer, and also to teach them a few dance steps.”

She and her husband, Jymi, have been married for 22 years. They live in Winsted with their two children, Shelby and Tyler. Darlene enjoys outdoor activities including: kayaking, hiking, horseback riding and walking.

MaryAnne visits patients in several of the northern towns our agency serves: **Falls Village, Lakeville, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon and Winsted**. She says she has “always” worked in healthcare. She started her career as a certified nursing assistant and earned her L.P.N. degree at Kaynor Technical School in 1992.

Before joining VNA Northwest in 2005, MaryAnne did private duty nursing, and also worked at a nursing facility and at Geer Village in North Canaan. While she was at Geer, she specialized in wound treatment. This is one of the clinical skills she is very confident in and continues to use in homecare nursing. She recently became certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN). MaryAnne says she finds many aspects of being a visiting nurse rewarding. One of these is helping her patients to become well and more independent. As much as she enjoys getting to know her patients, it is “gratifying” when they are well enough to be discharged, she says.

In her free time, MaryAnne likes to spend time with her eight-year-old son. She also enjoys photography.



MaryAnne Spring, LPN, CHLPN

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Bantam, Morris and Litchfield



Kim Cole, RN, WCC

Kim Cole says she was inspired to become a nurse when she saw the compassion and care that nurses gave to a member of her family who was hospitalized for an extended period of time. After that experience, she started training at Naugatuck Valley Community College and became an R.N.

Before joining VNA Northwest in 2003, Kim worked at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital for more than three years. She is now case manager for patients in **Morris and Bantam**.

Kim has earned advanced clinical certification from the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®), and she is also certified in Geriatrics. She considers her rapport with her patients to be one of her main strengths. She often advises her patients this way: “Listen to your own body. Only you know it best. She appreciates the opportunity home care offers her to spend time teaching each patient, and says, “It’s rewarding when they become well again.”

Kim is a resident of Thomaston and the mother of two grown children. Her daughter, Courtney, is currently interning in the fund development department at VNA Northwest. Her son, Evan, is an Eagle Scout and a Fire Explorer in Thomaston. Kim says that in her spare time she enjoys fishing, and spending time with Molly, the family’s beagle.

Kim Lagana has been case manager for VNA Northwest’s **Litchfield** patients since 2009. Prior to that time, Kim worked as case manager for VNA Northwest in the Washington/Warren area from 1998-2001.

Kim is originally from the New York City area. She has been working in the nursing field for 33 years. At the age of 15, she started her career as a nurse’s aide. She then went on to get her L.P.N., and ultimately her R.N. license, along with a B.S.N. degree from Adelphi University, Long Island, NY. She has been a registered nurse for 24 years.

She has gained experience through her nursing work in multiple environments, including both public and private hospitals in the New York City area, long-term care and rehabilitation facilities, as well as home care. While at VNA Northwest, Kim earned advanced certification from the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®), and the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN). She is also certified in IV Therapy.

She says she enjoys being a homecare nurse for many reasons, including the “mix” of patients and their varied diagnoses. “You can do and see so much,” she says, adding “It’s a give and take with my patients. I give them nursing care, but I get back so much more from them!”

Kim lives in Litchfield with her 10-year-old son, Jake.



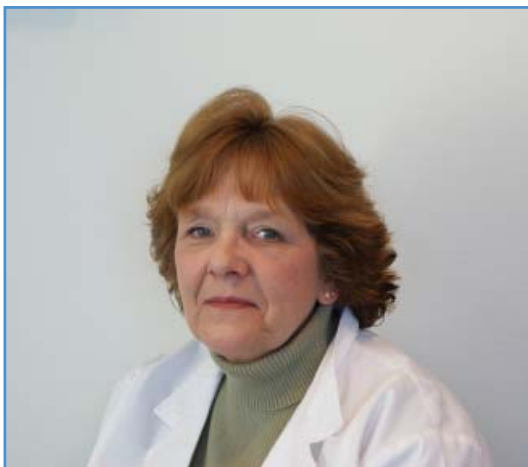
Kim Lagana, RN, BSN, CHPN, WCC

Northfield, Plymouth, and Thomaston

Barbara has been a member of the VNA Northwest nursing staff since 2003, and she has been a nurse for more than 30 years. She visits patients in **Thomaston and Northfield**. When she was growing up, Barbara planned to become an art teacher. But due to a personal loss and a change in circumstances, she went to work as a nurse's aide. Three years later, she went to nursing school in Brattleboro, Vermont.

Her first nursing position was on the night shift at the former Winsted Hospital. She later worked at two skilled nursing facilities in Torrington where she had various roles, including head charge nurse, staff development/in-service coordinator, and therapeutic recreation director. Because she has undergone heart surgery herself, Barbara says she can relate especially well to her cardiac patients. She likes being a home care nurse for many reasons. First of all, "with just one patient at a time, you really get to know your patient and your patient's family. Also, "I just love our elderly population," she says. "I enjoy listening to their stories."

Barbara and her husband live in Torrington. They have two grown daughters, one of whom is a cardiac nurse. Their other daughter is an occupational therapist and a social worker. Barbara's artistic flair is very evident in the beautiful theme baskets she assembles for friends, family and fundraising events, including VNA Northwest's annual golf tournament.



Barbara Sokolik, LPN



Sarah Minervino, RN, CHPN

Sarah visits patients in **Thomaston, Northfield, and Plymouth**. At one time, she worked in business administration and computer programming, before taking time off to stay home with her two youngest children. When they were school-age, she decided to pursue a career in nursing.

"My husband suggested it," she said. "He thought I would make a good nurse because I was always helping our elderly neighbors." So Sarah went to Naugatuck Valley Community College, in her 40s, and graduated with honors. She has her R.N. and an associate's degree, and is working on her bachelor's degree now. Before joining VNA Northwest in 2011, she worked in a hospital setting and gained some valuable experience in hospice care. She says this helped her to pass a difficult exam and become certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN) recently.

About her new career in home care, Sarah says, "I'm really loving this. I was just able to identify two patients who needed treatments in order to avoid being hospitalized. It's very satisfying to be able to spot something, get it treated, and make it possible to keep patients home." Sarah and her husband, Randy, live in Northfield. They have four children ranging in age from 11 to 24, and they are anticipating the birth of their second grandchild soon.

Harwinton, New Hartford, Terryville, and Torrington

Janet is in her 10th year at VNA Northwest, and she has been a licensed practical nurse for more than 40 years. She is a graduate of Torrington High School and Berkshire Medical School, and she is familiar to residents of both **Torrington and Harwinton**, the towns where she regularly visits patients

Janet worked for many years at Winsted Hospital, in the intensive care unit and specifically with cardiac patients..

“I did a lot of stress testing,” she said. Janet also has experience in skilled nursing facilities, physicians’ offices, at Community Health & Wellness Center in Torrington, and with another homecare agency.

She said she chose to become a nurse because she has always had a desire to take care of people. She said she especially likes to care for the elderly and patients with cardiac concerns.

“I always encourage my patients to participate in their care, and I teach them to advocate for themselves, she said. She enjoys being a visiting nurse because of the “one-on-one” time she can spend with each patient.

Janet and her husband, Jim, have been married for 21 years, and they live in Winsted. She enjoys gardening, boating, and spending time with their new grandson.



Janet Gagnon, LPN



Sharon Kloczko, RN, BSN, CHPN

Sharon is a long-time employee of VNA Northwest — she has been with the agency for 16 years. Prior to this, she worked at New Britain General Hospital for more than 20 years. Sharon received her education at Central Connecticut State University. She is also certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN).

As one of the agency’s case managers, she oversees care plans for her patients in **Torrington, Harwinton, New Hartford, and Terryville**. Individual plans, which she coordinates with physicians, may include visits from skilled nurses, physical or occupational therapists, home health aides, and medical social workers.

“I always ask my patients, ‘what is your goal before discharge?’, and then work with them to help them achieve their goals,” she said.

Sharon says her strong clinical skills helped her to make the transition from hospital to home care. Since she started her career as an LPN over 30 years ago, “nursing has become a lot more challenging,” she notes. She says she likes home care because it allows her to spend uninterrupted time with each patient, and, “it also gives you a lot of time for teaching.”

Sharon and her family live in New Hartford. She and her husband, Chet, have been married for 30 years and have three grown children. Their daughter, Katie, a former VNA Northwest home health aide, started her own nursing career last year. In her free time, Sharon enjoys horseback riding and taking long walks.

For a schedule of Blood Pressure clinics, visit our calendar page, www.vnanw.org

Weekend Nurses -- Serving All of Litchfield County



Tara Shortsleeve, RN, WCC, CHPN

Tara has been visiting patients in the towns of **Sharon, Kent, Warren, Washington, New Milford and New Preston**. She will continue to visit patients in Sharon on an as-needed basis when she assumes her new duties as weekend nurse.

Tara says she was inspired to become a nurse after witnessing the hospice care that her grandmother received from some very special nurses. "After that, I dragged my mom and we went to nursing school together," she said.

At that time she lived in Florida, and she and her mother graduated from Indian River State College. Soon after that, she signed on as a travel nurse and moved north to work at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, MA, for two years. She later worked at High Watch in Kent, and also spent some time caring for her father while he was ill.

Soon after joining VNA Northwest last year, she attended an intensive one-week wound care training and become certified by the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®). Expert care of wounds is an important skill for a home care nurse to have, and "I like wound care a lot," she says. Tara is also certified by the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN).

She says she is happy to be a visiting nurse. "I enjoy the one-on-one time with my patients, and the chance I have to teach them without being interrupted. It's so good to get to know their families, too."

Tara and her fiancé, Eric, live in Sharon.

Nancy is one of VNA Northwest's weekend nurses, which means she visits patients **wherever she is needed** on Saturdays and Sundays. Prior to this, she saw patients in Thomaston for over two years. She will soon celebrate her 10th year as a nurse, and says she chose the field because she wanted to be able to help people and make a difference in their lives.

Nancy received her R.N. at Naugatuck Valley Community Technical College and has associate's degrees in both liberal arts and nursing. She is also certified in wound care through the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®). In addition to home care, she has had several years of experience working in a skilled nursing facility setting. She says she enjoys home care because, "it allows me to spend time with, and focus on, one patient at a time." Nancy and her husband live in Torrington with their young daughter. Nancy's hobbies include art, reading, gardening, and genealogy.



Nancy Petro, RN, WCC

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programs and services at
www.vnanw.org



Bethlehem, Washington and Woodbury

Jodie visits patients in the towns of **Woodbury and Bethlehem**. She is trained in travel health medicine, and is also certified in wound care through the National Alliance of Wound Care® (NAWC®).

Jodie has been a nurse for 22 years. After receiving her nursing education at Mattatuck Community College in Waterbury, Jodie signed on as a “travel nurse” and embarked on short-term assignments to various locations throughout the United States.



Jodie Ellis, RN, WCC

She particularly liked working at a hospital in Georgia that is affiliated with a university. Throughout her early years of nursing, she gained experience in pediatrics, maternal and child health, orthopedics and neurosurgery. She also spent some time working in a long-term care facility.

Eventually she returned to northwest Connecticut, married and started a family. She and her husband have two sons, ages 11 and 12, and live in Morris.

In addition to giving her the opportunity to help others, Jodie says she chose nursing as her career because it offers independence and flexibility. She says she especially enjoys being a visiting nurse because it affords her time to truly get to know her patients. “I believe I can offer more comfort to them in their own home environment than I could in another setting, like a hospital or facility,” she explains.

In her free time, Jodie enjoys horseback riding and other physical activities. She has competed in Iron Man triathlons in the past, and hopes to train for another one in the future.

Hospice Presentation is Open to Community

Maggie Callanan, RN



VNA Northwest and Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation invite you to be their guests at a program titled, “Surprising Messages of Hope” on Wednesday, May 23rd, at The Litchfield Inn. This event begins at 5 p.m., and includes hors d’oeuvres and dinner.

Maggie Callanan, a nationally-acclaimed speaker and author, will present an inspiring talk about her experiences as a long-time hospice nurse. Please call us at 860-567-6000 to make a reservation. There is no charge, but seating is limited.

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Some members of VNA Northwest's clinical staff, L-R: MaryAnne Spring, LPN, CHLPN; Nancy Petro, RN, WCC; Malisa O'Neill, LPN, CHLPN; Sarah Minervino, RN, CHPN; Nona Williams, RN, CHPN; Sharon Kloczko, RN, BSN, CHPN; Lisa Baird, OT; Nancy Deming, RN, BSHA; Margaret Manz, RN, BSN, COS.C; Darlene Grant, RN, BGS, WCC; Back row: Lisa Cook, RN, BSN; Gail Atkinson, OT; Barbara Sokolik, LPN; Joanne White, RN, CHPN.

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