

Hospice Care Touches Many Lives

“Hospice is our nation’s best kept secret and my hope is that everyone who wishes to stay in his or her home for a comfortable, dignified death can [take advantage of] it...Thank you for all you are doing to serve families in need.”

— Mercedes Dewey, daughter of hospice patient

At right, sisters Susan Ebersol and Mercedes Dewey give their mother, Constance Geiger Miller, a kiss at her 95th birthday party. Mrs. Miller was a VNA Northwest hospice patient who passed away in early 2011.



“Having my husband on hospice care was a positive experience. The hospice personnel were not ‘invasive’ in my home. They heard what [I] wanted, and never overstepped my comfort zone.”

— Victoria Meaney, wife of hospice patient

“Thank you for your professional and compassionate care for my mom...and for all of us during the Hospice phase of her illness. You were so supportive, and as a family we drew strength from your support and direction.”

— Gratefully, Barbara Valley [daughter of hospice patient] and family



Linda McMaster, right, with VNA Northwest nurse Kim Cole, RN. Kim was a member of the Hospice Team that cared for Linda’s mother, Jeanette McMaster.

Morris resident Linda McMaster was a special guest at VNA Northwest’s recent Annual Meeting. She spoke about her mother, Jeanette McMaster, and the impact that our Hospice Program had on her and her family while her Jeanette received hospice services: “It was an overwhelming experience of exceptional care, expertise and love,” her family agreed. Jeanette passed away in December of 2010.

“As difficult as it was to lose Mom, your support and guidance made her death a positive, loving experience... We are forever grateful to Kim (nurse) and the Hospice Team for sharing our love, laughter and tears.”

— The Family of Jean McMaster

Entire VNA Northwest Nursing Staff Completes Hospice Training

VNA Northwest is dedicated to providing the highest level of care for each and every patient, and end-of-life patients and their families have special needs. Currently, two of our agency’s nurses, Sharon Kloczko, RN, and Malisa O’Neill, LPN, are certified through the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN).

This fall, the entire clinical staff completed a five-week hospice certification preparation training session led by Donna C. DiMartino, RN, MSN, CHPN. Ms. DiMartino is Director of Palliative Care for Sharon Health Center. We are looking forward to having several more nurses achieve their national certification in the very near future.

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Hospice News from VNA Northwest



“I can’t speak highly enough about Tara. She’s been wonderful.”

--Mrs. Barbara Wasley

Mrs. Barbara Wasley, left, with Tara Shortsleeve, RN

Warren Family Thanks Nurse for Comfort and Support

It is a mild autumn afternoon, and Barbara “Bobbie” Wasley, her daughter, Jane, and Tara Shortsleeve, RN, are standing in the Wasleys’ kitchen discussing the details of a hospital bed delivery for Bobbie’s husband, Irving “Wings” Wasley. Mr. Wasley is resting on the sofa in the living room, where sunlight illuminates the family portraits and photographs that decorate their home. The two women have many questions for Tara, the VNA Northwest nurse who has become a trusted friend to them over the past several weeks. When one of them apologizes for asking so many questions, Tara reassures them. “That’s what I’m here for!” “I can’t speak highly enough about Tara,” said Mrs. Wasley. “She’s been wonderful.”

Under VNA Northwest’s hospice plan of care, the symptoms of Mr. Wasley’s terminal illness were quickly brought under control so that he could spend his final days in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his family. Known to many in the Warren area as a loving husband, father and grandfather, he passed away at his home on November 4, at the age of 83. His obituary reads, “he loved his family and was happiest when he was with them.” Mr. and Mrs. Wasley celebrated 55 years of marriage in October of this year.

The cost of hospice care is often covered by Medicare and private insurance programs. To the extent funding is available, we offer a sliding scale based on a patient’s ability to pay. Your tax-deductible donations to VNA Northwest enable the agency to provide hospice and home care to patients who are uninsured or underinsured.

What is Hospice Care and How Does it Work?

Hospice is a special concept of care designed to provide comfort and support to patients and their families when a life-limiting illness no longer responds to cure-oriented treatments. At VNA Northwest, each hospice case is managed by our team of dedicated professionals, including physicians, nurses, home health aides, therapists, social workers, clergy and trained volunteers. They work together to meet the needs of patients as they near the end of life. And each case is unique. For example, if a patient requests it, we will send a licensed hairstylist who is also a member of the agency’s office staff to cut the patient’s hair. Our team is dedicated to ensuring that patients live their final days with dignity, without pain and in a loving environment. **Please see next page for family testimonials.**

Interested in Learning More About End-of-Life Care Options?

VNA Northwest will present an information session on this topic free of charge to your group or organization. Please call our Administrative Assistant, Bridget Beauchaine, at 860-567-6000 to make arrangements. Our Hospice Coordinator, Joanne White, is always available to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

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