

# The Caring Connection

Winter 2012

VNA Care NETWORK & HOSPICE



## ■ Patient's life-threatening wound heals with nurses' care and advanced treatments



Faith Blatt, RN, and Charles LaBella

Charles LaBella won't even glance at the wound that nearly took his life.

He chuckles a bit when his nurse from VNA Care Network & Hospice tells him "it looks fabulous. I'm saying, 'A wound looks fabulous?' The nurses get so excited (to see how well it's healing)," said Charles.

His story sounds like something from a prime-time medical drama. He saw what looked like a pimple on his skin and didn't give it a second thought. By the next night, Charles was being taken by helicopter from Newburyport to a Boston hospital where he was fighting for his life.

Charles had a very rare bacterial infection. Doctors operated immediately, and Charles spent the next few days in and out of a medically induced coma. He suffered a heart attack during the coma, and, after regaining consciousness, went through surgery to repair a tear in his esophagus.

Nearly two weeks later, he was able to return to his Salisbury home with the support of his wife, Priscilla, and the care of VNA Care Network & Hospice's home health team.

"It felt great coming home," said Charles. Pictures of his family line the windowsill. A box of get well cards drawn in crayon by the first graders at Newbury Elementary School, where Charles is an instructional assistant, sits nearby.

VNA Care Network & Hospice's Wound Care Program uses advanced technologies and treatments and a holistic approach to help patients with complex wounds regain their health. Patients receive a consultation by a Certified Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurse (CWOCN) who develops comprehensive treatment plans in collaboration with patients' physicians.

Faith Blatt, RN, is one of the nurses who cares for Charles at home. Her visit includes checking the wound and the portable wound vacuum assisted closure (VAC) device that can help patients heal faster and decrease their risk of infection. There's time for Faith to answer his questions, including how documenting the visit in an electronic medical record helps her coordinate his care with others on the home health care team.

Charles said he's impressed by all of the clinicians' knowledge, professionalism, and dedication to their patients. "It's not just a job for them. They are really concerned about me, and I feel that," he said.

With his wound nearly healed, Charles knows he won't need the nurses' visits much longer. He added, "They're special people to me. I will probably hate to see them go."

### More Information

For more information about VNA Care Network & Hospice's home health care services, please call us at 800-728-1862 or visit [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

## ■ Mary Ann O'Connor named president and CEO



VNA Care Network & Hospice recently welcomed Mary Ann O'Connor, RN, BSN, MBA, as president and CEO.

Mary Ann brings more than 35 years of health care management experience to her new role, with 24 years at the senior executive level. Her career spans the acute care, home health, hospice, and private duty sectors of health care as well as home-based disease management programs.

She previously served as the regional director of Manhattan for the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY), the largest not-for-profit home health agency in the United States. During her tenure at VNSNY, Mary Ann was responsible for management, business development and patient admissions, implementation of

*Continued on page 2...*

## ■ CEO brings extensive experience to VNA Care Network & Hospice

...Continued from front cover

strategic business plans and service delivery models, and promoting relationships with hospitals, nursing facilities, and physicians in the Manhattan region.

Prior to her work with VNSNY, Mary Ann served as vice president of strategic planning and business development for the Visiting Nurse Services of Connecticut in Bridgeport, Conn.; president and CEO of United Visiting Nurse Association in Trumbull, Conn.; and executive director/director of nursing of Trumbull Public Health Nursing Service in Trumbull, Conn.

Mary Ann holds a master's in business administration from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn., and a bachelor's of science in nursing from Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y. She has worked to further nonprofit home health care at the national level as a member of the board of directors and government relations committee of the Visiting Nurse Associations of America and at the state level as a member of the board of directors for the Connecticut Association for Home Care.

She has also been on the board of directors of Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing and president of the board of directors of the Women's Campaign School at Yale University.

## ■ Ensuring your hard-earned money goes to those who matter most

It's easy to put off paperwork, but delaying updates to your retirement plan's beneficiary designation may mean your money could end up in the wrong hands.

"A lot can change over the years — a marriage, a divorce, children, and grandchildren. A current will doesn't cover your retirement account. Courts usually honor the beneficiary designation, even at the expense of the people and charities that matter most to you today," said Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development for VNA Care Network & Hospice.

Updating your retirement plan's beneficiary designation is a simple process and normally free. Most plans have a beneficiary form available to download from their website. If not, contact the plan administrator for a copy.

The beneficiary options on retirement plans are flexible, so you can opt to name both individuals and charities as beneficiaries and indicate a percentage or dollar amount to go to each. You can support VNA Care Network & Hospice's mission of caring by naming VNA Care Network or VNA Care Hospice as a full, partial, or secondary/contingent beneficiary.

*This information is intended for educational purposes only. For legal, tax, or financial advice, please contact your professional advisors.*



The original, completed beneficiary form must be mailed back to your retirement plan. Be sure to keep a copy for your records. You may also want to review the form with your attorney or other professionals involved with your will and/or trust for more comprehensive estate planning.

If you include VNA Care Network & Hospice in your estate plans, please let us know so we can recognize your generosity during your lifetime with membership in the Caring Connection Bequest Society.

### More Information

For more information or assistance with including VNA Care Network & Hospice in your estate plans, please contact Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1360 or [jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org](mailto:jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org).

## ■ Help marathon runner reach her goal by giving to the Tippet Home

...Continued from back cover

online, mention Dale in the comments section. You can also include well wishes for us to send along to Dale.)

To learn more about the Campaign for the Tippet Home or make a donation, please contact Susan Young, director of fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1370 or [syoung@vnacarenetwork.org](mailto:syoung@vnacarenetwork.org). Naming opportunities begin at \$1,000.

### Hospice Care in Eastern and Central Massachusetts

In addition to the Tippet Home, VNA Care Network & Hospice provides end-of-life care at the de Rham Home in Cambridge, Monahan Home in Worcester, and patients' homes throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts. For more information about hospice care, please call us at 800-728-1862 or visit [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

## ■ Businesses support home health, hospice, and pediatric care

VNA Care Network & Hospice is grateful to our 2011 corporate donors for supporting nonprofit home health care and hospice programs in Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

Many 2011 Business Partner Campaign donors fostered our work in providing complex maternal-child health care and pediatric services. VNA Care Network & Hospice's nurses, rehabilitation therapists, and social workers aid our youngest patients in reaching their greatest development potential. Sometimes these fragile patients are faced with a life-limiting illness, and VNA Care Network & Hospice provides the care to help them be at home surrounded by those who love them the most.

The following businesses contributed to the 2011 Business Partner Campaign:

### **GOLD**

Specialty Medical Equipment

### **SILVER**

Gorton's Seafoods

Mutual of America

### **BRONZE**

Prime, Buchholz & Associates, Inc.

The Medline Foundation

Westfield Capital Management Company, LP

### **CONTRIBUTION**

Bainbridge International, Inc.

Millbury Savings Bank

### **OTHER**

AAA Merrimack Valley

Barry Equipment Co., Inc.

Brodney & Sons, Inc.

Cabem Technologies

Cape Ann Insurance Agency, Inc.

Cape Ann Marina Corp.

Cape Ann Savings Bank

Charter Communications

Emcor Services New England Mechanical

First Parking Corp.

G & L Plumbing, Inc.

Glover's Floor Coverings, Inc.

Good as Gold Coffee Systems, Inc.

Keane Fire & Safety Equipment



*Donations enable VNA Care Network & Hospice to bring care and comfort to people of all ages.*

Lee Realty Company

Manchester Athletic Club

Martin Bros. Contracting Co., Inc.

Mastermans, LLP

MorganStanley SmithBarney

NW Pest Control

Page After Page, Inc.

Prestige Properties & Cleaning, Inc.

Ransford Pest Control, Inc.

Rockport National Bank

Secured Self-Storage, Inc.

Sharp Cleaning Corporation

Snow Harbor Graphics

Winhall Companies, LLC

## ■ Resources to help you stay healthy

VNA Care Network & Hospice wants you to be at home with your health, so we offer numerous clinics, support groups, and other resources that promote wellness in local communities.

This is just a sampling of what's available. Details about bereavement support groups, pre-diabetes talks and screenings, medication management clinics, and more are available on our website, [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org), or call 800-728-1862.

**Keep Well Clinics** are a chance for seniors to meet one-on-one with a nurse for blood pressure monitoring and other health assessments. Thanks to grants and donations, VNA Care Network & Hospice offers Keep Well Clinics in 22 communities. For a schedule, call VNA Care Network & Hospice at 800-728-1862 or visit [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

**Fall prevention kits** include an exercise guide and home safety checklist. Request a free kit by calling us at 800-728-1862.

**Home safety evaluations** are available in seniors' homes in Eastern and Central Massachusetts. This service may be covered by Medicare or other source for seniors who have become weaker, fallen, or seen other changes in their health, such as increasing difficulty walking. Call VNA Care Network & Hospice at 800-728-1862 for assistance.

**Caring Connection eNewsletter** delivers health and wellness tips and news about upcoming programs straight to your e-mail. Subscribe at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org) or [www.facebook.com/VNACareNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/VNACareNetwork).

## ■ How to reach VNA Care Network & Hospice:

### **Service Information**

800-728-1862

### **All Offices**

800-521-5539

### **Mailing List and Donations**

888-663-3688, ext. 1370

### **Website**

[www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org)

### **Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/VNACareNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/VNACareNetwork)

VNACareNetwork

## ■ Boston Marathon runner dedicating race to “angels” who cared for her husband



Dale Fingar

Dale Fingar wanted to do something for the hospice home that provided such a “warm, loving, family-like atmosphere” during her husband Greg’s final days of life. So she’s lacing up her sneakers and running the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon.

Greg was only 54 years old when he moved to the Stanley R. Tippett Home in Needham. He had spent five and one half years battling pancreatic

cancer when it became time to focus on comfort instead of a cure.

Dale needed to continue working and couldn’t provide around-the-clock care for Greg. Neither of them wanted to burden their young sons, Steven and Michael. The Tippett Home was just what the Fingars needed to get through this difficult time. The hospice staff could offer physical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support to relieve the family’s worries and let them focus on making the most of their days together.

“When we finally got there, it felt like home. Greg loved it there. He said it felt ‘like Grammy’s house,’” said Dale. She recalled friends and family stopping by to share memories and their last good-byes, cookouts in the backyard, and her sons sleeping over to spend more time with their Dad.

“Greg got the best care. The people were loving and nurturing. I couldn’t provide that kind of care,” she said. Greg passed away on Sept. 1, 2010.

### Giving Back

Dale wanted to do something for the “angels” who cared for Greg. When she heard that VNA Care Network & Hospice was in the midst of a capital campaign for much needed renovations at the residence, Dale decided to turn her sixth Boston Marathon run into a fundraiser.

You can help Dale reach her goal of raising \$2,500 for the Tippett Home by using the enclosed donation envelope (note that the gift is in honor of Dale) or online at:

- Dale’s FirstGiving web page at <http://bit.ly/zf6nZp> (case sensitive)
- VNA Care Network & Hospice’s website at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org) (Click on the blue donate now button. When making a gift

*Continued on page 2...*

### Inside this issue

- VNA Care Network & Hospice welcomes new CEO
- Protecting your retirement plan assets
- North Shore resident recovers from rare infection under care of VNA Care Network’s nurses

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Development Office

At Home with Your Health  
NETWORK & HOSPICE  
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