

# HOME CARE CONNECTION

A newsletter for donors and friends of Partners Home Care

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781.290.4000

Partners Home Care is a member of Partners HealthCare, founded by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital.

## TRAINING "NEWLY-MINTED" NURSES: ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN HOME CARE

A unique, year-long training program enables home care nurses to walk into almost any situation and do what's needed

Judith Arneson, BSN, RN, Clinical Instructor and Coordinator of the New Graduate Internship Program at Partners Home Care, recalls a particularly memorable case from her two years as a home care nurse. "It showed," she said, "the power of relationships."



Judith Arneson, Coordinator of the New Graduate Internship Program

Her patient, an articulate, educated woman – a Ph.D. – had severe mobility problems and was suspicious of the health care system.

"She had a hip replacement that became infected and a subsequent accident and broken bone while in rehab," Judith recalled. "Her primary care physician had moved away, and she was anxious and depressed."

Unlike a hospital nurse, Judith couldn't "step out in the corridor" and ask for advice on how to best help her patient. She needed the relational and communication skills to get to the root of what was needed and then make it happen.

"In this case," said Judith, "I worked to get to know her and find out what was most important. I was right there when she made the call to find a new primary care physician to get medication to manage pain and depression – and to feel more 'plugged in' to health care. Having good nursing skills was important, but that alone would not have been enough."

### Developing Special Expertise

Whether it's helping a patient reconnect with health care, recover in the weeks after surgery, or manage a complex disease, the home care nurse needs broad knowledge and a wide range of nursing skills.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Christopher M. Attaya

Dear Friends:

In this spring issue of the **Connection** newsletter, we are pleased to highlight our New Graduate Internship Program, an exciting effort that is enabling us to develop “newly-minted” home care nurses and help maintain our staffing excellence.

This is an extremely important program for us, especially as we look ahead to increased demand for high-quality home care services. Part of the increase will be due to population aging. However, part will reflect continuing pressure from insurers to transition patients out of hospitals sooner and into skilled nursing facilities or other settings like home.

From our experience, home care is an excellent solution for many patients. When we serve patients in their homes after a hospital stay, we can often help to dramatically speed their recovery. We save them the rigors of traveling to a hospital or doctor for follow up care, and enable them to recover in the comfort and privacy of their homes.

But to provide the best possible home care services, we need your help. Institutional spending caps have been placed on new programs for years to come, yet we still need to move ahead with staff training and new technology to deliver excellent quality, innovative, and cost-effective care.

In this issue you will also see an article on **Leaders for Home Care Progress**. Through this program, donors can help us achieve cutting-edge advancements in home care. Our goal is to ultimately deliver a level of care that is available today only in a hospital intensive care setting.

We hope you will read about the program and then join us in this important effort. And, as always, thank you for your support of our programs, and we look forward to your continued support in the months and years ahead.

Christopher M. Attaya, MBA, FHFMA  
President & CEO



Mission

Our commitment is to deliver compassionate home health care and community based services to enhance the quality of life for those we serve.

## Training “Newly-Minted” Nurses continued from page 1

To help develop those abilities, in August 2008, Partners Home Care undertook a major commitment by launching its year-long New Graduate Internship Program, with Judith Arneson as the clinical instructor and coordinator. Besides being an experienced home care nurse, Judith has brought additional clinical, administrative, and research experience to her role.

Currently, six nurses, ranging in age from their mid 20’s to early 50’s, are participating in the program that combines classroom training with patient care under the guidance of an experienced home care nurse and “mentor.”

Nearly all of the six nurses have an undergraduate degree in a non-nursing field – from criminal justice to biology. In addition, all are recent graduates with a B.S. degree in nursing. “When we interviewed for the program, we were looking for mature, self-starters, individuals with life experience beyond just nursing school,” Judith said.

She notes that the home care nurse needs to orchestrate patient care, often with limited supervision, and that takes wisdom in addition to really good assessment skills and clinical judgment. She also has to coordinate with physicians and other professionals.

“We take the best people and train them so they can walk into almost any situation, determine what’s needed, and make it happen,” Judith said.

### Classroom and Field Experience

All of the nurses in the program participate in classroom-

based training (skills labs, lectures, and case discussions) initially three days per week, and develop broad nursing skills during the first six months. They also work with an experienced home care nurse, accompanying her as she visits her patients, and as the months go by, assuming some of the patient load.

The group that entered last August is now in the middle phase of training – working largely out in the field and treating some of the 15 to 30 patients typically seen by their mentors each week. Late in the training program, each new home care nurse will begin to see her very own patients, rather than those delegated by her mentor.

### Excellence in Home Care Nursing

The program, which was developed and mapped week-by-week by Judith, also received input from experienced and newly-hired Partners Home Care nurses.

In addition, Judith tapped the expertise of faculty from the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute

of Health Professions, Curry College, Boston College, Regis College, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Salem State College.

“I’m so grateful to Partners Home Care for making the space for the program to develop,” she said. “They are really invested in growing home care nurses.

We’re equipping new nurses to function as independent, resourceful, and skilled professionals and expanding our capabilities to deliver comprehensive case management and the highest quality patient care.” ■

*The home care nurse needs to orchestrate patient care, often with limited supervision, and that takes wisdom in addition to really good assessment skills and clinical judgment.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Partners Home Care is one of the region’s largest home health care providers. We offer a full array of certified home health, hospice and private care services in homes, assisted living communities, and nursing homes in more than 140 towns throughout Eastern Massachusetts.
- Each year, Partners Home Care provides 360,000 certified home care visits.
- In 2008, the agency provided care for 367 patients who were uninsured, as well as 1,222 patients who were covered by Medicaid, where the cost of their care exceeded reimbursement.
- In addition, each month, Partners Home Care provides 200 health clinics in 20 towns throughout Eastern Massachusetts – many in collaboration with organizations such as Councils on Aging and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## ANATOMY OF A VISIT: IT'S ALL ABOUT TEACHING

With the help of a home care nurse, the patient can be home “eating his own food, wearing his own clothes, seeing visitors – and having peace of mind.”

It's raining hard on a Friday afternoon, but the weather clears long enough for Margie Saliba, a nurse-intern and participant in the New Graduate Internship Program (see article, page 1), to enter the house on a quiet, residential street in Norwood.

Inside, her patient, a 55-year-old retiree, sits watching TV. They begin their visit by catching up on personal news – Margie telling of her teenage daughter's adventures in driving and Paul (not his real name) commiserating. He has kids, too, now all grown.

Paul was released about two weeks earlier from Brigham & Women's Hospital after surgery for a rare condition. And while Margie is relatively new to home care nursing, the fit works for both of them.

“I think the nursing field requires a person to be more than what's in the job description,” said Paul, who explained that he finds that “extra” quality in Margie and this has helped create a comfortable working relationship.

### Providing a “Safety Net”

At the start of home care, Paul, his wife, and his daughter were able to meet with both Margie and her nurse-mentor, Audrey Sirois, and discuss his care needs. They also learned what to be alert for between Margie's home visits.

“When you first come home from the hospital, you're performing without a net,” Paul said, “but then she would show up and answer the questions we had.” He added that while his daughter is a surgical nurse, Margie works essentially in recovery – “it's like having two different types of doctors,” he said.

Margie, who worked in the computer field for many years before graduating from Curry College's Accelerated Nursing Program, asked Paul how he felt when he first learned that she was a new nurse.

“I feel confident in her judgment,” he responded, adding that philosophically he believes that participating in training is good. “How else will they learn?” Margie also noted that focused wound care training has been part of her year-long New Graduate Program, with access to wound care specialists and ongoing classroom content.

### Focus on Teaching

Margie added that, overall, her role is “all about teaching” – from how to handle day-to-day recovery tasks, to when to call the nurse, or the doctor, or 911.

She said that her visits are most frequent in the beginning to provide extra support and care when they are most needed, in the days after surgery. This is her sixth visit to Paul in a little over a week in order to check on his wound and how he is feeling.

During each visit she checks vital signs, how the wound is healing (especially looking for any signs of infection), assesses pain, and asks about bowel and bladder function. Aware of the impact that health concerns can have on emotional health, she also checks for signs of anxiety or depression.

Margie updates Paul's medical records via a laptop computer that she carries on her visits. (She explained that she writes down findings, but prefers not to enter the data until she gets in her

car after the visit – so she can maintain face-to-face contact with her patients.)

She said that together they review long-term goals at each visit, and she can pull in other resources as needed, such as Paul's doctor, physical therapy or occupational therapy, social services, or community resources. And she depends on Paul's openness about how he's feeling and his overall well-being. “We work together,” Paul said; “it's symbiotic.”

### Overall Involvement

“Also, I try to continue to get to know the family, so they don't have to be anxious about him,” Margie added. “So, then, instead of having to be in the hospital for follow-up care, he can be at home, eating his own food, wearing his own clothes, seeing visitors – since social aspects are important – and having peace of mind.”

At that point, Margie moves on to conduct a physical exam and provide post-surgical care in keeping with Paul's individual plan of care. She puts on her stethoscope and gets to work. ■

*“When you first come home from the hospital, you're performing without a net,” Paul said, “but then she [Partners Home Care nurse Margie Saliba] would show up and answer the questions we had.”*



LEADERS FOR HOME CARE PROGRESS: PLEASE JOIN US



“The need for home care services will rise dramatically in the near future, some estimates say as much as 30 percent over the next five years,” according

to Christopher M. Attaya, President and CEO of Partners Home Care.

Partners Home Care is planning to meet this challenge by identifying a set of groundbreaking initiatives to shape the future of home care.

In January 2009 we launched Leaders for Home Care Progress to support these initiatives. We are inviting membership with gifts of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, or more. The money will be earmarked for three essential areas:

**#1 Developing Home Care Clinical Specialists for the Future**

Our goal is to create the first Career Institute for advanced training of clinicians in disease management and care of complex cases in a home setting. Focus is on wound care, congestive heart failure, and management of diabetes and cancer.

“Patients do better at home,” said Maribeth MacDonald, who is coordinating Leaders for Home Care Progress for Partners Home Care. With advanced training, clinicians will be able to provide home care that is available today only in a hospital setting.

**#2 Broadening Access to Information and Resources**

Our goal is to put advanced technology in the hands of every clinician, and expand telemedicine, including 24/7 Webcams and remote monitoring.

“Today there are devices that can be placed in the home to record vital signs,” Maribeth said. “However, the devices are expensive – about \$2,500 each – and insurances don’t cover them. Donor funding will help cover the costs.”

She added that funding also is needed to upgrade the laptop computers that nurses carry on home care visits,

with a goal towards expanding electronic medical record capabilities.

**#3 Empowering Patients with Advocacy and Education**

We also are committed to providing tools and resources to make patients safe in their homes. A first step is to provide medication dispensers to help prevent medication errors. Additionally, our focus is on fall prevention and quality of life programs for patients with chronic illness.

“We feel it is part of our role to teach patients and community members how to care for themselves,” said Maribeth, who noted that Partners Home Care has already offered lectures on Lyme disease and fall prevention in several Boston-area communities.

**A Special “Thank You” for Home Care Leaders**

When you participate in Leaders for Home Care Progress, you receive a number of special benefits. Major contributors have access to executive-level personal health care services, such as membership in a 24-hour medical emergency hotline for traveling executives and their families, and for some, an Executive Physical Examination.

We will keep you informed on how your involvement is improving our programs and our patients’ lives. And we will provide recognition in the Partners Home Care Annual Donor Honor Roll, invite you to participate in an exclusive lecture series, and more.

“Our mission is to provide the best quality, state-of-the-art and compassionate home care possible,” Maribeth said. “Many exemplary people believe strongly in this mission, as well.”

Through Leaders for Home Care Progress, you can help ensure that Partners Home Care delivers excellence in state-of-the-art home care for many years to come. ■

To learn more about Leaders for Home Care Progress, please contact Maribeth MacDonald at [mmacdonald0@partners.org](mailto:mmacdonald0@partners.org) or call her at 781-290-4012.



**To Benefit** • Partners Home Care & Partners Hospice

**June 24, 2009** • PINEHILLS GOLF CLUB • PLYMOUTH, MA

PRESENTED BY **Bank of America** 

The annual Tee-Off is the largest single fundraiser for Partners Home Care and Partners Hospice. Event proceeds are crucial to our mission to deliver compassionate home health and hospice care services to enhance the quality of life for those we serve, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, or playing golf on a summer day, please contact Keturah Sawyer, Director of Events, at 781-290-4021, or [ksawyer@partners.org](mailto:ksawyer@partners.org) or go to [www.partnershomecare.org/golf](http://www.partnershomecare.org/golf)

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PARTNERS HOSPICE

*Celebration of Hope*

COURAGEOUS VOICES OF HOME CARE AND HOSPICE

TO BENEFIT PARTNERS HOME CARE & PARTNERS HOSPICE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2009 \* BOSTON HARBOR HOTEL, WHARF ROOM

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Partners Home Care would like to thank the friends and family members who generously contributed gifts in honor, in memory or in lieu of flowers of someone special in their lives. This list reflects tribute and in lieu of flowers gifts made between January 1 and April 25, 2009.

## IN HONOR OF

Lori Barberia  
 Kathy Burokas  
 Mary Cannon  
 Nancy E. Chane  
 Elaine Crawford  
 Anthony DiPietro  
 Jennie DiPietro  
 Pam Ferrante  
 Martina Hegarty  
 Matthew Keleher  
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Lynda Saviano  
 Nancy Skinner  
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## IN MEMORY OF

Donna Aldrin  
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 Anna Yandle

We have made every effort to be inclusive and accurate and respect requests for anonymity. However, if you have questions, corrections or would like to amend the listing of a name, please contact Melinda Forstey at 781-290-4094. ■

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

We are grateful to the many patients and families and their friends who send us wonderful letters and e-mails expressing their gratitude to our staff and for the services that Partners Home Care is able to provide. We are pleased to share these kind words of support with you.

### Dear Partners Home Care:

I have been under Partners' care many times and am so currently. I just cannot say enough of every service I receive, and have in the past, from the kindest, most professional people who come to my home from Partners Home Care. I am grateful for all that Partners offers, but more so of how it is "given." I felt that I am in the care of real angels who know the best and perform their miracles right here in my own home.

### Dear Partners Home Care:

I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks for all the care given to my husband in his time of need. Each and every nurse and therapist were all so wonderful, professional, caring and concerned. We are ever so grateful.

### Dear Partners Home Care:

I greatly appreciated the home care given to me by your staff. Their visits contributed to my speedy recovery, comfort and peace of mind.



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in support of our work.

**LIVE BUTTERFLY RELEASE**

*Celebrating the lives of cherished  
family and friends*

Please join us for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Live Butterfly  
Release, where members of the community are  
invited to attend and to sponsor butterflies in  
memory of loved ones. The evening will include  
inspirational stories, a recitation of names, and a  
release of butterflies, followed by a reception.

A donation of \$30 will be accepted for each butterfly release to benefit the work  
of Partners Hospice. Event attendance is free.

**New this year.** Purchase a memorial butterfly bush to plant in your yard. Butterfly  
bushes can be pre-ordered for \$12.00 and will be available for pick-up at either  
event. (We cannot ship or deliver plants to you.)

**June 4, 2009 • 5:30 pm • The Bradley Estate**  
2468 Washington Street (Rte. 138), Canton • [www.bradleyestate.org](http://www.bradleyestate.org)

**June 11, 2009 • 5:30 pm • The Lyman Estate**  
185 Lyman Street, Waltham • [www.lymanestate.org](http://www.lymanestate.org)

To RSVP or to order butterflies or bushes, contact Joanne Bailey Hanna at  
781-290-4072 or by e-mail at [jhanna3@partners.org](mailto:jhanna3@partners.org) OR visit  
[www.partnershospice.org/butterfly](http://www.partnershospice.org/butterfly) to complete an enrollment form.

