

Helping the Community Manage Chronic Illness

While offering the most advanced medical procedures in the world, the U.S. health care system falls short when it comes to chronic care. Chronic diseases are those of long duration and generally slow progression. They affect roughly 133 million Americans today and account for more than 70% of the total U.S. expenditures on health care.

The number of people with one or more chronic illnesses is increasing dramatically. This rise is partly the result of increased risks from smoking, obesity and other lifestyle and environmental factors and partly the consequence of a steady increase in longevity. Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable, and most can be effectively controlled.

Community Visiting Nurse Association is pleased to announce it has received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – New Jersey Health Initiatives for a “Transitions in Care Program,” which will help to address chronic illness in Somerset and Middlesex Counties. This grant represents statewide recognition for programs that seek innovative strategies and collaborations to resolve health care needs of New Jersey communities.

The program is a collaborative effort among eight Somerset County providers who are seeking a joint approach to provide quality

care, patient self-management and empowerment to individuals with chronic diseases of Congestive Heart Failure and/or Diabetes. The program’s collaborating providers are Community Visiting Nurse Association, Somerset Medical Center, Arbor Glen Continuing Care, Bridgeway Care Center, Somerset Valley Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, Green Knoll Care and Rehabilitation Center, Greenbrook Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and Raritan Health and Extended Care.

The program termed “CARE,” A Collaborative Approach to Reach Patient Empowerment, will utilize an Advanced Practice Nurse to follow patients through “transitions of care” from the hospital to all other levels of care, including being discharged to home.

It will implement patient-centered initiatives, including patient coaching, customized disease management workbooks, personal health diaries, individual scales, support groups and educational offerings to assist individuals to increase their knowledge and



comfort with self-management. Patterned after a proven standard of care, the “Coleman model,” the program will focus on patient coaching and supporting patient’s efforts to manage their disease effectively. The pillars of the Coleman coaching model include: medication self-management, follow-up physician appointments, “red flag” signs and symptoms and a patient-centered record.

“Community VNA is proud to be on the forefront of new ideas and initiatives to promote the health care needs of our communities,” states Alyce Brophy, President/CEO of Community VNA. “No single organization can navigate the issue of chronic illness alone. This collaboration will effectively assist individuals and the community to better manage chronic disease.”

Implementation of the “CARE” program began at the end of September. For more information about the program please contact Community Visiting Nurse Association or one of its partners.





Healing your total knee replacement at home

Community Visiting Nurse Association's Joint Replacement Program is an excellent choice for those total hip and total knee patients who want to return directly home after joint replacement surgery. We are affiliated with The Somerset Medical Center Joint Surgery Institute and have successfully treated many of their joint program patients. Patients who have their surgery at other hospitals and are not planning to go to a rehab center can also participate in the CVNA Joint Replacement Program. Patients are seen by skilled nursing and physical therapy within 24 hours of discharge and then daily by the physical therapist for the next five consecutive days, including weekends.

Our rehabilitation team works in coordination with the surgeon to ensure excellent wound healing, pain management and improved patient function. Joint replacement exercise protocols are personalized for each patient to increase joint strength, range of motion and functional activities, such as safe walking and stair climbing. Patient and caregiver education is provided by each team member, with the focus always on patient safety and comfort. After the initial week of services, the patient is generally seen by therapy 2-3 times per week until the physician feels the patient is ready for out-patient therapy services.

Patients report they are more comfortable and relaxed in their own homes. Many patients decline a stay at a rehabilitation center and feel they have the proper support system in place so they can return directly home after their hospital stay. According to Joan Smith, PT, CVNA Rehabilitation Manager, "Having one-on-one physical therapy in their own environment for the first five days post-hospital stay has resulted in patients having excellent outcomes in both joint range of motion and function." Receiving therapy in their own homes allows patients to practice functional activities in their own living environment and builds patient confidence and functional competency quickly.

Receiving your post joint replacement rehabilitation in the comfort and familiarity of your own home is a very viable alternative for many patients.

Please call the Rehabilitation Department at CVNA at 908-725-9355 if you have any questions about our Joint Replacement Program.

Successful Strategies to Prevent Heart Disease

Heart disease is a leading cause of death to many Americans. You cannot change your family history, sex or age, but you can take steps to avoid the problems associated with heart disease by altering your lifestyle and putting into place these five healthy lifestyle changes.

■ **DON'T SMOKE OR USE TOBACCO.** Smoking or using tobacco is one of the most significant risk factors for developing heart disease. The chemicals in tobacco can damage your heart and blood vessels, leading to narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which can lead to a heart attack. Not only does smoking cause a narrowing of the arteries in your heart, but the nicotine in cigarettes makes your heart work harder, causing your heart rate and blood pressure to rise. Even a little exposure puts you at risk. Secondhand smoke—or "social smoking"—is dangerous and increases the risk of heart disease.

If you are a woman who smokes and takes birth control pills, you have a greater risk of having a heart attack or stroke than are those who don't do either. Risk increases with age, especially in women over 35.

Studies have shown that within one year after you quit smoking, your risk for heart disease drops significantly.

■ **EXERCISE FOR 30 MINUTES ON MOST DAYS OF THE WEEK.** Before you begin any physical activity you should discuss it with your physician. Daily exercise can reduce your risk of fatal heart disease. Physical activity not only helps you control your weight but it also can reduce your chances of developing other conditions that may put a strain on your heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. An added benefit of physical activity is stress reduction, which is also a contributing factor in heart disease.

The goal is at least 30-60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. If you can't meet that guideline, you can break up your workout time into 10-minute sessions. Everything



counts towards physical activity – doing housekeeping, walking your dog, gardening, etc. Just remember to start off slowly.

- **EAT A HEART-HEALTHY DIET.** Incorporate foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products can help protect your heart. Beans, other low-fat sources of protein and certain types of fish also can reduce your risk of heart disease. It is important to limit your intake of fat – saturated, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and trans fat. Saturated fat and trans fat all increase the risk of coronary artery disease by raising blood cholesterol levels.

Eating healthy is about reducing your caloric intake and increasing your consumption of fruits and vegetables. The goal is to have 5-10 servings a day. Eating that amount of fruit and vegetables can not only help prevent heart disease, but also may help prevent cancer.

Studies have also shown a diet rich in Omega-3 fatty acids may decrease your risk of heart attack and lower blood pressure. Foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids are salmon, mackerel, flaxseed oil, walnut oil, soybean oil and canola oil. Omega-3 fatty acids can also be found in supplements.

- **MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT.** As you increase your physical activity and incorporate a heart-healthy diet into your lifestyle you have a better chance to achieve a healthy weight. Excess weight can lead to conditions that increase your chances of heart disease – high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Discuss your ideal body weight with your physician. Even a small weight loss can be beneficial. Reducing your weight by just 10 percent can decrease your blood pressure, lower your blood cholesterol level and reduce your risk of diabetes.
- **GET REGULAR HEALTH SCREENINGS.** High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage your heart and blood vessels. Speak to your physician to determine if screenings are recommended for high blood pressure, cholesterol levels and diabetes.

Enlightened Ginger-Spiced Pumpkin Pie

- Submitted by Lauren Bernstein, MS, RD, CDE
Community VNA

Ingredients

- 1 cup finely crushed gingersnap cookies
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- 2 large egg whites
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pack pumpkin
- 1 cup canned evaporated skim milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp ground ginger

1. Combine crushed cookies and butter in a medium bowl. Mix well. Press mixture onto bottom and up sides of 9-inch glass pie plate. Refrigerate 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat egg whites and brown sugar in large bowl. Add pumpkin, milk, vanilla, cinnamon, ginger and salt. Mix well. Pour mixture into crust.
3. Bake 60-70 minutes or until center is set. Transfer pie to wire rack and cool 30 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 8 servings.

230 calories 7 gms fat 5 gms protein 335 mg sodium
38 gms carbohydrates 2 gms fiber



Welcome to our ninth edition of
**AT HOME WITH
COMMUNITYVNA**

Hospice News

Community Care Hospice held its **Annual Remembrance Service** on Thursday, September 15, at the FINDERNE REFORMED Church. Family and friends joined the Hospice staff in remembering in prayer, story and song those who have touched our lives.

The **fall bereavement support group**, "**Journey Toward a New Day**," will begin October 17 at the VNA office. The group will be facilitated by Angela Calogero, Bereavement/Volunteer Coordinator, and Reverend Frank Villerius, Hospice Chaplain. The support group is for adults who have experienced the loss of a loved one. It is open to hospice families as well as the community. There is no charge for the support group, which meets every Monday for six weeks from

6:30-8 p.m. Other resources for help and support following a loss, including information about additional supportive services in the area, can be obtained by calling Community Care Hospice.

A special workshop, "**Coping with the Holidays**," will take place on Saturday, November 19, at the VNA office. Guest speaker Audrey Oxenhorn, LCSW, will help participants as they learn to face the holidays after the loss of a loved one. This program is free of charge. Registration is required.

Community Care Hospice's annual fundraiser, "**Light Up a Life**," will culminate in a special tree-lighting ceremony on December 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the offices of the Community Visiting Nurse Association, 110 West End Avenue, Somerville, NJ. The

community and Hospice families are welcome to attend.

Community Care Hospice offers a variety of programs, educational information and support services. We are available to speak to your church group, school and community group.

For more information or to register for any of these programs, please call Community Care Hospice at (908) 725-9355, ext. 2230.



For quality home and hospice care, please contact Community VNA at 908-725-9355.