

# NOTICE TO ALL PHYSICIAN OFFICES

In our continuing efforts to improve communication and referral services to physicians, we have made the following telephone changes effective February 15, 2006:

## Verbal Orders:

Please call 1-800-660-4867 for all verbal orders to include lab orders, medication changes, the addition of disciplines to the care plan, and/or changes in wound or IV treatment plans. Upon receipt of your call, you will be transferred to specially trained clinicians who will answer questions and process your verbal order.

## Referral Services

Please continue to call our direct Intake line for referrals: 1-866-255-8744. Intake clinicians will guide you through the admissions process, describe the benefits of home care, arrange for services and verify insurance coverage.

TO ADD OR DELETE A NAME PLEASE CALL (800) 660-4867

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HomeHealth  
VISITING NURSES OF SOUTHERN MAINE

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www.homehealth.org  
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The MaineHealth Family



# HomeHealth Connections

WINTER 2005-2006

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING DEPARTMENT  
(207) 284-4566 OR (800) 660-4867

## 2005 Report to the Community

By: Mia Millefogle, Vice President,  
Development and Marketing

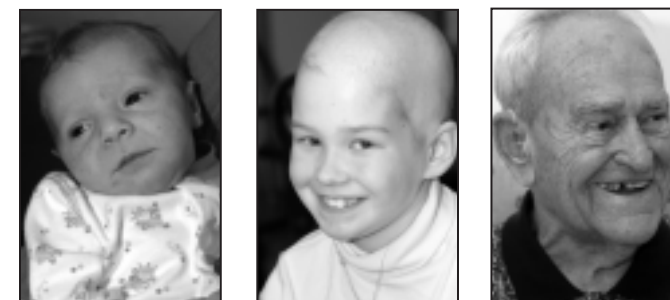
We are pleased to present a summary of our 2005 Annual Report to the Community and the highlights of our first full year as HomeHealth – Visiting Nurses of Southern Maine.

During the past fiscal year, our nurses, rehabilitative therapists, social workers and home health aides traveled over 1.6 million miles, throughout our service area that encompasses 23,189 miles.

In this year, we provided the following services:

- Home health care to patients in 69 towns, cities and islands 24 hours/day, 7 days a week
- 107,815 home visits to 7,343 new patients that include newborns, children and adults
- 7,351 health tests and screenings to 6,659 clients at one of our 275 clinics
- 388 Telehealth “video visits” to 78 patients with at-risk cardiac problems
- Over 10,000 hours of volunteer support

These figures represent patients like Elena – a newborn filled with promise, Katie – facing her third battle with cancer and Armand – gaining strength and independence following a leg injury.



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## DIABETES

### EDUCATION & SUPPORT

HomeHealth-VNSM offers a comprehensive education and support program for diabetic patients called “Enjoying Life with Diabetes.” Program goals are to promote the physical and emotional health of people with diabetes in a supportive and confidential environment. Classes are offered every other month and include an individualized assessment, nine hours of group meetings and final consultation with goal setting. Topics include: Overview of Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes; Developing Nutrition and Exercise Plans; Weight Control; Stress Management; Diabetes Medications and Treatment.

Positive patient outcomes have been demonstrated statewide including a reduction in the occurrence and length of diabetes-related hospitalizations. The “Enjoying Life with Diabetes” is recognized by the American Diabetes Association. Medicare, MaineCare and most insurance companies cover the \$400 program fee; however, no one is turned away due to lack of funds or insurance. For more information, contact Program Coordinator Faith Thibodeau, a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) at 1-800-660-4867 ext. 4363.

### LIFELINE INCREASES PATIENT SECURITY & INDEPENDENCE

Lifeline, the leading personal response system, is now available throughout our entire service area. With the touch of a button, the Lifeline system automatically connects with trained Lifeline Associates who assess the situation and contact the appropriate emergency assistance. Lifeline response time is usually less than 30 seconds.

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These services advance the mission and the rich 100-year history that precedes our organization beginning with the first visiting nurse hired by the city of Saco in 1896, followed by the creation of Portland District Nursing Association in 1904, and the formation of nursing agencies in Sanford, Westbrook, Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Scarborough, Cape Elizabeth, Wells, and York. Throughout this history, numerous agencies merged over time with the goal of consolidating resources, reducing costs and expanding services. In keeping with these goals, Community Health Services of Cumberland County and Visiting Nurse Service of York County merged in March 2004 to create HomeHealth – Visiting Nurses of Southern Maine, a member of the MaineHealth Family.

We have set a solid foundation that includes achieving Medicare certification without deficiencies, accreditation through the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP), a comprehensive benefit program, an agency-wide electronic medical record, and standardized policies for both clinical and human resources. Through a grant from the Davis Foundation, we expanded our Home Telehealth Program to Cumberland County. Today, heart failure patients throughout southern Maine can receive Telehealth interventions, a state-of-the-art technology that allows our nurses to conduct interactive “video” visits from a central base station. In addition, Lifeline, the leading personal response system, was expanded throughout our service area. With financial support from towns and grants from the United Way of Portland and York County, we extended services to those patients in greatest need who lacked insurance or other resources to pay for care.

To learn more about our services or for a copy of our Annual Report, please call 1-800-660-4867 or view our newly launched website at:

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

## The Social Workers' Role at HomeHealth-VNSM

By Jacqueline Alpert, MSW

A social worker's role can be instrumental to the success of a home care plan. Social workers are trained in counseling to help individuals cope with life challenges. Social workers also serve as advocates for their patients and help them obtain community resources that can improve quality of life.

HomeHealth-VNSM's social workers work as a team with nurses and therapists to care for and support patients receiving our home health care services. Social workers often assist patients who are returning home from the hospital with deteriorating health or a temporary disability related to surgery. Patients may be anxious about changes in their health and its impact on independence and safety. Social workers can help by providing counseling to decrease anxiety and teaching tools to help patients gain confidence and emotional strength.

Social workers also are frequently asked to help when a family member who is a caregiver becomes overwhelmed with responsibilities, feels isolated and/or is discouraged. Our social workers provide supportive counseling and information about community resources to assist caregivers in their role.

If your patient would benefit from our social work services, please call (800) 660-4867 for more information or to make a referral.

### *Lifeline Continued from page 1*

Lifeline helps patients live more active, independent lives at home. Lifeline is especially helpful for patients with physical limitations, chronic heart or lung problems. Lifeline fees are \$40 for the first month (which includes installation and activation) and \$35 each month thereafter for monitoring service. Upon request of service, installation usually occurs within 3 business days by trained home health aides or volunteers.

For more information about Lifeline services, contact our Lifeline Coordinator at 800-660-4867.

## Provider Relations Liasons: A Physician's Connection to Home Care

Mia Millefogie, Vice President - Development and Marketing

The role of our Provider Relations liasons is multi-faceted and changing as we adapt to an increasingly complex and competitive health care field. At HomeHealth – Visiting Nurses of Southern Maine, our provider relations staff serve several important functions to include: coordination of home health care services at Maine Medical Center, facilitation of referrals from the community, and education to physicians and their staff about the scope and range of home health care services. Central to their work is the goal of successfully transitioning a patient from facility to home.

At **Maine Medical Center**, **Susan Rosenbaum, RN** and **Skip Brushaber, LPN** work very closely with 28 hospital care coordinators to manage and facilitate the transfer of care to our agency. Consistent with Medicare regulations, our involvement begins once the physician has determined that the patient requires home health care services, the patient and/or family has chosen our agency and the initial discharge plan has been developed. Following these steps, our liasons often meet with patients and families at the hospital to educate them about services, explain eligibility guidelines and reimbursement options. Our liasons also consult with hospital staff about the types of patients appropriate for home health care.

For the physician community, our liasons **Suzanne Detullio, RN**, **Sharon Kerner, RN** and **Susan Rosenbaum, RN** serve as resources and important connections to home care services. In this community role, they serve as educators and advocates for home health care. To support the physician's role in arranging home care, our liasons will:

- Coordinate onsite educational programs for specialty services to include Telehealth, Pre- and Post-Operative Joint Programs, home safety evaluations, Parent and Child Health Care, wound care and diabetes
- Inform physician practices about the eligibility requirements for home health care services as regulated by third party payors
- Educate physicians about changes in the Medicare home care provision
- Assist office staff with facilitating referrals to our agency
- Consult with physicians caring for patients with complex home health care needs

HomeHealth – Visiting Nurses of Southern Maine is a Medicare certified and state licensed not-for-profit agency and a member of the MaineHealth Family. We provide the full range of home health care services throughout York and Cumberland Counties. Please visit our website at [www.homehealth.org](http://www.homehealth.org) for more information. To learn more about our services or to arrange for a site visit to your office, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at (207) 284-4566.