



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, It's hard to believe another year has gone by. We remain committed to supporting the home care needs in our community during a pandemic. While we all had hoped that by now, we would be further along the continuum of eliminating COVID-19 from our everyday lives, we are grateful for the progress that has been made and proud of what our team has done to help make that happen.



Despite the challenges, our small but dedicated team of nurses, therapists, support staff and volunteers have not just survived, but thrived. From ensuring every home care patient could receive a COVID-19 vaccination, to making masks, to launching telehealth services, every possible tactic has come into play to fulfill our mission. Talk about grace under pressure! Our team has been outstanding and we have not missed a single day of service throughout this pandemic.

As we look ahead to the new year, we will continue to innovate, as we address whatever new obstacles and opportunities come our way. Whether it's developing a new LNA training program or piloting a new telehealth program, we'll adapt and find a way to provide compassionate care to our community.

As always, we can only do this with the support of friends like you. We hope you'll consider a donation in any amount to help us continue our mission despite the financial challenges of COVID-19.

Sincerely,  
Sandy L. Ruka, MS, RN  
Executive Director

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WE APPRECIATE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS.

Make Your Gift Online at [www.VNHCH.org](http://www.VNHCH.org) or Return the Enclosed Courtesy Envelope with Your Donation.

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## VNHCH PILOTS TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

With generous funding from NH Charitable Foundation, the Samuel Hunt Foundation and the Bald Peak Fund, VNHCH has implemented a new telehealth pilot program that will allow for better quality outcomes for patients across all of their services - home care, hospice, and long-term care. Telehealth allows the VNHCH care team to visit with patients in the home utilizing iPads (or computers) and Zoom for Healthcare for a secure connection.



Executive Director Sandy Ruka says they have engaged Andrea Huertas, MBA, BSN, RN, to oversee the program. They have purchased iPads for patients without their own devices, and scales for measurements, blood pressure cuffs and pulse oximeters to allow for remote monitoring.

Andrea explained the benefit of the program: “We want to make it so that the patients feel that they are connected across the continuum of care. It will give us a chance to keep them more involved in their care and allow them to stay at home.”

During COVID, patients have felt isolated. The goal of telehealth is to let patients and providers stay much more connected and to improve clinical outcomes. Andrea added, “Telehealth can reduce the need to go to the ED or the hospital. It will give us the ability to connect in real-time and give them a sense of ownership of their care.”

VNHCH staff education began this fall and the pilot is set to launch in November.

*Telehealth utilizes computers, iPads, blood pressure cuffs and pulse oximeters to access care.*

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## KATHLEEN SHEEHAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



*Kathleen Sheehan*

Congratulations to Jennifer Barriere-Kenney, the 2021 recipient of the Kathleen Sheehan Memorial Scholarship. She is enrolled in the nursing program at White Mountains Community College, in Berlin, NH and is a Graduate of Kennett High School.

The scholarship is in honor of Kathleen Sheehan, a long-time nurse for VNHCH and the hospice administrator as well. She was the agency’s first hospice administrator and was influential in starting the program.

After Kathleen passed away from cancer in 2009, our staff thought about a good way to honor her memory and recognize all she did for our agency and the community. They came up with the idea of the scholarship. This idea was approved by the VNHCH board and has been in place since then.

Congratulations to Jennifer. May she carry on the legacy of commitment to nursing epitomized by Kathleen for years to come.

# PROTECTING THE HOMEBOUND FROM COVID-19

When the COVID-19 vaccine was rolled out in New Hampshire, many homebound seniors were unable to get to vaccination sites. Based on a pilot program championed by the Home Care, Hospice, and Palliative Care Alliance of NH, VNHCH participated in a statewide home bound COVID vaccination program that provided COVID vaccines to people and caregivers who could not leave their homes to go to a vaccine clinic.

Packaging, transportation and the initial limited supply of the vaccine created hurdles. VNHCH utilized guidelines developed by the organization, including a special cooler, temperature gauge, syringes, needles, alcohol wipes, masks, prescreening questionnaires, and patient education materials. The members of the vaccine team or “Team Vax” created a roster and schedule to administer vaccines. They created a standby list, so no vaccines were wasted. They also ensured that each patient got their necessary second doses.

Executive Director Sandy Ruka, RN, met with NH’s Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) and the Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care Alliance of New Hampshire to strategize how best to serve these vulnerable homebound individuals. “We wanted to be certain that these elders in our community were accommodated and not overlooked between state and regional public health networks. NHDHHS Commissioner Lori Shibinette asked state home care agencies to contact patients to determine who required services and compile a list of those in need,” Sandy explained.

VNHCH’s Covid Vaccine Response Team, made up of Ashlee Chaine, Jennifer Robinson, Anita Duncan, RN, Lindsey Kafka, RN and Sandy Ruka, MS, RN, acted promptly to take advantage of the state’s effort to vaccinate homebound seniors.

With the help of volunteers, they called over 200 patients to determine if they were homebound and required a vaccine. Teaming up with the nurses, Ashlee Chaine and Jennifer Robinson handled the technical pieces to lessen the burden on the nurses.

It wasn’t just the scheduling logistics that were challenging - the handling of the vaccine itself is time-consuming and precise. “Once we open that vial, we have six hours to get out and administer doses. We had to think through where we need to drive, how many nurses were available, and how many doses were required. Depending on those logistics, we were only able to do a few patients a day. Adding to the time crunch is the 15-30 minute observation period required after administering the vaccine.”

*Protecting the Homebound from COVID-19: Continued on page 6*



*Lindsay Kafka RN administers a COVID-19 vaccine*



*Jen Robinson, part of the Covid Vaccine Response Team*

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## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

### VNHCH Promotes from Within - Kelly Peckham, RN, Clinical Director



*Kelly Peckham, RN*

Always looking for ways to offer career advancement and to promote from within, VNHCH this year promoted Kelly Peckham, RN, to the new role of Clinical Director.

Kelly was well-positioned to assume the role of Clinical Director after her predecessor required an extended medical leave in 2020. Kelly had been working as Clinical Coordinator, but quickly took on additional duties to meet the need.

She started with the agency in 2016 as a case manager field nurse, giving her a well-rounded background to her newly expanded job. “(VNHCH) has given me many opportunities to move up. They have been supportive, encouraging learning and growth,” Kelly explained. “I’ve found a niche in home care. I enjoy being in the client’s home which is different from in-patient care. With home care, you get to educate the client and build a relationship – another difference from working in a hospital or other facility.”

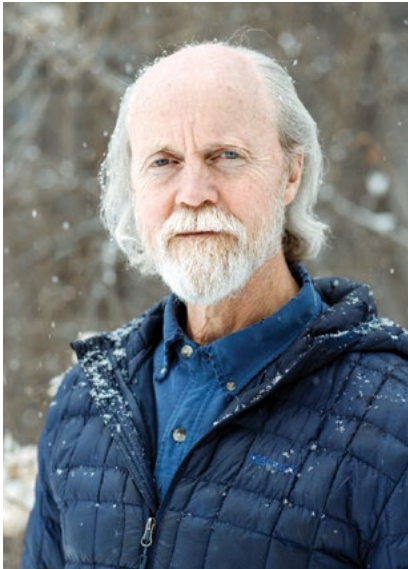
As Clinical Director, Kelly oversees clinical staff and operations, a challenging and critical function for a visiting nurse operation. She manages the logistics and clinical direction of the entire clinical team, including dozens of nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, homemakers and licensed nursing assistants.

Kelly is excited to serve the agency in this Director level position, focused exclusively on clinical care. “Having a 100% focus on skilled and long-term care services will help us be more successful.”

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## “WHY HOME CARE”

### VNHCH produces a recruitment video with award-winning producer Thom Pollard.



*Thom Pollard*

Like many organizations in the region, staffing continues to be a challenge for VNHCH. However, the agency has many advantages over other employment options. To help educate prospective employees of the “why” behind home care as a profession, VNHCH worked with NH-based producer Thom Pollard to create a compelling visual story.

Thom interviewed LNAs Tamra and Kim along with long-term care coordinator Ashlee to explain why work with a purpose is a meaningful choice for many people. In the video, each takes time to explain what makes home care the right choice for them.

As a Bartlett resident, Thom often works with local non-profits like VNHCH when he is not traveling the world for his latest project. He is an award-winning Director of Photography and Filmmaker who has filmed from Easter Island to the summit of Mount Everest and everything in between. His films and camera work have won numerous television, film and production awards, including an Emmy, finalist of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts for best cinematography, as well as a Silver Telly in the Nature/Wildlife category for his camera work. His photographs have appeared in dozens of books and languages worldwide, as well as in numerous publications, including National Geographic Magazine.

The video was distributed to those interested in new career options, employment seekers, and fans and friends of VNHCH on social media. To watch, view at [VNHCH.org/jobs](http://VNHCH.org/jobs)

VNHCH is grateful to Thom for sharing his considerable storytelling talent in helping the agency get out the word about its profession.

# VOLUNTEER PROFILE

VNHCH is grateful for the 40+ volunteers who donate their time, talents and compassion, supporting programs ranging from our Crossings Childhood Bereavement Program to our Hospice Care Services. While we greatly value the work of all our volunteers, we would like to highlight one volunteer for this report, who received special state-wide recognition this year.

Volunteer Chele Miller was named in 2021 by The New Hampshire State Commission on Aging as one of this year's recipients of the Older Adult Volunteer Awards. These awards honor individuals or couples aged 60 or older who have shown outstanding leadership or achievement as a volunteer serving to build strong communities in NH.

In February of 2020, VNHCH rallied a small group of volunteers who began to sew masks. They weren't sure what the demand would be, but they had a sense that it would be wise to get ahead of it.

Their first goal was to create a supply of masks for the caregivers and the homebound people they served in their community. They knew that while many services might close their doors, the need for home care would never stop, and they wanted to make it as safe as possible for everyone.

The stitchers refined their design and pooled their supplies of fabric and thread, their stashes of elastic, and even narrow strips of metal roof flashing they cut to create adjustable nose pieces. There was one volunteer among them who wanted to help but was not adept at the machine. When someone ran out of elastic one day, she offered to pick-up a resupply from someone across town and deliver, and that was the moment when Chele Miller became the Mask Maiden.

Within a week she was the courier and coordinator of the entire operation. Shuttling supplies, doling out miles of rationed elastic from industrial spools, and coordinating all communications among the team. She was also the finisher, collecting the completed masks, washing, drying, pressing, and packaging every single one. While the total count is lost to time, it is thought to be in the thousands.

VNHCH Executive Director Sandy Ruka, RN, stated, "Volunteers like Chele make it possible for a small community agency like us to do important work. We are grateful for her service and are so proud of her for being recognized by the State Commission on Aging. We are grateful to everyone on the team who worked so hard to make these masks!"



*Chele Miller and Clara Phillips, 3 years old, daughter of Lauren Sayers and Jeremy Phillips, shown here wearing two of the thousands of masks manufactured by VNHCH volunteers.*

## VNHCH BY THE NUMBERS

FISCAL YEAR 2021

- **Homecare Visits**  
21,133
- **Homecare Patients**  
836
- **Hospice Visits**  
1,494
- **Hospice Patients**  
84
- **Miles Driven**  
251,687

## FINANCIAL REPORT - Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021

### Where the Money Comes From:

Medicare	2,032,730
Medicaid	287,738
Private	943,542
Bad Debt	(34,364)
<b>Total Patient Revenue</b>	<b>3,229,646</b>
Grants	231,863
Other	674,716
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>4,136,225</b>

### Where the Money Goes:

Program Expenses	2,758,026
Administrative and General	691,889
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>3,449,915</b>
<b>Gain from Operations</b>	<b>686,310</b>
Contributions	59,849
Investment	73,840
Change in Fair Value	617,146
<b>Total Non-Operating Revenues</b>	<b>750,835</b>
<b>Excess Revenue over Expense</b>	<b>1,437,145</b>

Protecting the Homebound from COVID-19:

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The VNHCH team quickly became experts in the proper handling of the vaccines, which require exacting protocols for temperature controls. For instance, vaccines can be stored in a refrigerator, but not one with a freezer.

Ruka shared that their efforts could not have happened without the support and collaboration of regional and local organizations, including Carroll County's NH Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Victoria Paige, and Will Owen, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at Memorial Hospital. Over 5,000 vulnerable patients were vaccinated statewide through this Home Care, Hospice, and Palliative Care Alliance of N.H initiative.

## 2021 DONOR HONOR ROLL

Fiscal year July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

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Janet Hadley Champlin	Cheryl Emerson	Janice Hill
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Candy Chaplin	Christ Church	Bob Homes and Pam Abbott

## GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Over the course of our last fiscal year, we were fortunate to receive support for programs including Crossings Childhood Bereavement Program, Palliative Care, and Simple Comforts supports for low-income clients. We'd like to thank the many foundations who provided their generous support.

In addition to these foundations, we are part of a community-wide initiative funded through the Administration for Community Living and its Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative. This funding allowed us to hire Jennifer Grise, APRN to provide palliative care services for those with cognitive impairments. We are excited to be part of this community collaborative to help those with dementia and related diseases remain in their homes!



*Jennifer Grise, APRN*

Michelle Holt	Mark and Mary Lucy	Jane Perley	Dick and Kathy Stewart
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George Howard	Kelly Maccario	Lee and Meg Phillips	Daniel Sukis
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Patricia Jones	Alfred F. Miesemer	Mary Ruka	William Volk
William Jones	Kate Milbury	Brett and Cindy Russell	Bill and Norma Wadsworth
Phyllis Kaczynski	Elaine and Stanley Millen	Joke Russell	Larry and Ann Walrod
Mark and Susan Keenan	Henry Mock	Dana Russian	Helen Wasco
Walter and Catherine Keirans	Dennis and Susan Morgan	Joseph and Lucille Russo	Fred and Joyce Watson
Barry and Pamela Keith	Kelly Morris	John Santuccio	John and Tracy Weitz
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Ken and Sarah Kimball	Bob and Jean Murphy	Ray and Arden Schoen	White Mountain Oil & Propane
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Doris Kirk	Edward and Melody Nester	Beth Schurman	Allen and Betsey White
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Russ and Joan Lanoie	North Country Health Consortium	Gary and Cathy Shackford	Whittier Lions Club
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Daniel and Lauren Lounsbury	Joan L. Penn	Al Stewart and Paula Marini	
	John and Alice Pepper	Nancy Stewart	

*Patient Care Simulator Program:*  
**Continued from back page**

TERi™ also addresses crucial daily living assistance. LNAs can correctly learn the essentials of bathing, hair care, denture care, hearing aid placement, eye care and ostomy/catheter care.

TERi can also be used for continuing education for all VNHCH staff, or other community agencies in need of this special training.

To donate towards the TERi patient care simulator and related expenses, please make a donation in any amount on our website: [www.VNHCH.org](http://www.VNHCH.org).

## IN THE NEWS

We are proud of the work of our staff who created our Crossings Bereavement Program. So it was no surprise when we got the call from WMUR's NH Chronicle, who wanted to tell the story of how this program is helping children mourn in a safe and healthy way. Crossings received funding this year from the Clarence E. Mulford Trust.



View the video at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/WMURcrossings>

## PATIENT CARE SIMULATOR PROGRAM TO BE SUPPORTED BY FOUNDATIONS, DONORS



*LNA with TERi™ geriatric manikin*

With workforce shortages continuing to challenge just about every business in the region, VNHCH is looking for new and innovative ways to build its own source for recruitment by investing in technology to train new LNAs.

In support of this initiative, VNHCH is seeking funding to be used towards the cost to set up a comprehensive simulation lab to enable newly licensed LNAs to get the hands-on practical experience they need to ensure the highest quality of care for home healthcare patients.

The centerpiece of the lab is a like geriatric manikin, TERi™ (pictured here) that has soft silicone skin with natural body movements, adding to its realism.

LNAs will be able to perform the spectrum of clinical tasks, approved by the NH Board of Nursing LNA Scope of Practice Advisories, using the simulation manikin.

For emergencies, TERi™ can mimic the full experience – from intubations for ventilator training and auscultation with heart and lung sounds to CPR resuscitations with carotid pulse. Even patient vital signs and monitored signals can be replicated.

*Patient Care Simulator Program: Continued on page 7*

www.VNHCH.org

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