

# learn. enjoy. share.

the newsletter of potomac valley nursing & wellness center  
2nd Quarter 2018

## Palliative Care: promoting daily quality of life

**Palliative Care:  
to cure sometimes,  
to relieve often,  
to comfort *always*.**

### Support whenever needed.

Whether providing needed daily comfort due to a progressive illness or simply the process of aging, palliative care is a remarkably valuable program in skilled nursing facilities. Focusing on each person's unique physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs, daily quality of life is supported through a variety of resources and strategies.

### Palliative Care vs. Hospice

There is frequently confusion about the difference between palliative care and hospice because they DO share some common elements, pain management, for example.

Unlike hospice services, palliative care does not require the diagnosis

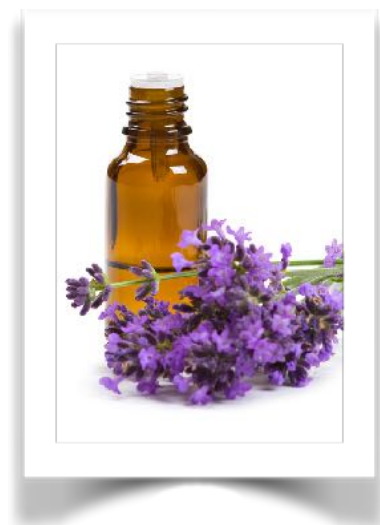
of a terminal illness. It can be integrated at ANY point in time within a resident's medical care plan during any type of health challenge.

### An interdisciplinary approach.

Led by Palliative Care Program Director, Dr. Tormeika Sanford, DNP, MSN, CRNP and Dr. Anurita Mendhiratta, M.D., virtually every discipline participates in development of each resident's palliative care plan. Potomac Valley's program has been cited for its "Excellence" by the American Medical Directors' Association (AMDA).

This team includes physicians, Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses, Geriatric Nursing Assistants, Social Workers, Registered Dietitian, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Life Enrichment, and Pastoral Care.

Potomac Valley caregivers are specially trained and board certified in this unique programming.



Palliative care plans incorporate individualized assessment, education, and counseling. Family involvement is also an important element.

### Palliative Care program elements.

Because each person's palliative care plan is unique, the breadth and depth of services is remarkable. Aspects of palliative

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care also can include 24 hours skilled nursing support, pain & symptom management, specialty diets, and aromatherapy.

Palliative care may be provided within a resident's own room or in Potomac Valley's Serenity Room, which provides a place of quiet reflection or sharing with family and friends. Residents may also



Serenity Room

choose to receive massage or other comforting services in our Namaste Room.

### Supporting families, too.

Family peace of mind is a huge focus for us. Progressive illness or end-of-life increases family stress and at Potomac Valley providing them with comfort is also goal.

Very often, families just don't know what to do. We work with them to identify opportunities for meaningful time with their love one that uplifts. Through discussions with families we can garner additional insights of important past times/ things from a resident's life history and can then seek to include elements of that through palliative care. This might involve preparation of a favorite food to share or a special piece of music to play. Potomac Valley even can make arrangements for a private concert by a local harpist.

### Palliative care's growth.

One of the most encouraging indicators of the medical community's embrace of palliative care has been the inclusion of it within medical school curriculum.

According to Diane Meier, MD, Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, "*The vast majority of America's medical schools have palliative care programs and are teaching medical students and residents about palliative care. That didn't occur 10 years ago. There was literally no education on the topic.*"

Adds Potomac Valley CEO Michelle McEyeson, "*We are very proud to have offered this valuable resource to residents and their families for over a decade. It has made such a difference in our residents' care experience.*"

## Opioid use & the elderly.

These days it is the rare newspaper edition or evening news program that doesn't include some coverage of the opioid crisis in America. It is remarkable how many millions of lives opioid abuse has touched.

The evaluation of pain and the subsequent issue of pain control is a clinical challenge that all healthcare providers face.

For the elderly population, the use of opioids is more and more being discussed. According to the National Institutes of Health, "*special attention must be paid to the*

*efficacy and side effects of these powerful drugs when prescribed to an elderly population.*"

Among the risks in the elderly are falls/fractures and diminished cardiovascular function. Because many elderly person experience chronic pain, it can also lead to addiction. In a 2011 study, 15% of seniors were prescribed an opioid when they were discharged from the hospital; three months later, 42% were still taking the pain medicine. In the past 20 years the rate of hospitalization among seniors for opioid abuse has quintupled (*Kaiser Health News*).

Another issue related to opioid

abuse is that it can lead to the misdiagnosis of dementia.

As part of Potomac Valley's **SUCCESS Behavioral Health<sup>SM</sup>** Program assessment, it is not uncommon to find that the root cause of problematic behaviors or cognitive impairment is either poorly managed medication regimen or the misuse of certain types of medication.

While Potomac Valley does not provide addiction rehab, it does offer **post-addiction treatment** support. This can include further counseling by psychiatrists or psychologists and lifestyle strategies that can contribute to a safe and confident re-entry to the outside community.

# Photo favorites.

*The first quarter of 2018 proved a busy time for residents — from art, music, foreign films, faith-based and other celebrations and fine dining — our Life Enrichment team's efforts were enthusiastically received! (A talented resident spent quality time playing the piano!)*

*Potomac Valley's innovative programming even included electronic pet interactions!*



Michelle McEyeson  
JD, MBA, LNHA

## From the Administrator's desk.

It is with tremendous sadness that I share that Anna "Annie" Durkin passed away on March 28, 2018. Annie was born on July 26, 1955 in Dayton, Ohio. She was a beloved wife and mother to six children. She grew up in Rockville and resided in Germantown, Maryland. Annie loved the outdoors, hiking and biking. She considered herself a "Lacrosse Mom" as all of her children played.

Annie joined the Potomac Valley family on January 31, 2005 as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner. Shortly thereafter, Annie pioneered the development of Potomac Valley's robust Palliative Care Program. For many years, Annie served as the Director of Staff Development, helping to improve the knowledge and skills of her co-workers. As a vital member of our leadership team Annie made a difference in the lives of thousands of residents, families and our own staff. We dedicate this issue of the newsletter to Annie, honoring her mission to comfort through palliative care.

Annie retired just shy of her 13-year anniversary at Potomac Valley on December 19, 2017. Thereafter, she traveled, spent time with her children and new grandchild. She had plans to return to Potomac Valley as a volunteer in our Life Enrichment department.

We cherish our memories of Annie. Her legacy lives on through the award-winning Palliative Care Program that she lovingly built and maintained for over a decade. Potomac Valley is so grateful for Annie's many years of service and friendship.

In the near future, Potomac Valley will be holding a Celebration in Memory of Annie Durkin and dedicating its Palliative Care Program in her honor. We will provide more details as they become available and we invite you to attend. Our sincerest sympathies go out to her family and vast network of friends and colleagues.



Annie Durkin  
MSN, CRNP, ACHPN

## News and Notes:

**Family Council: April 15th at 11 am.** Meet Andrea Samet (Family Council President) and Sandra Hughes (Montgomery County Ombudsman). Share experiences and keep up to date on the happenings at Potomac Valley. Refreshments served.

**Spring Clothing:** It's time to swap out heavier items for lighter weight ware (esp. pajamas and nightgowns). All items should be marked with resident names and be added to the Resident's Personal Property List.

**April 1st Easter Sunday Celebration.** Celebrate with music, tea and cookies starting at 2 pm.

**May 6-12th The National Nurses Week theme is *Inspire, Innovate and Influence*.** We are incredibly proud of the dedication our nurses embody each day to quality care and quality of life for our residents!

**May 14th Mother's Day Tea Party** at 2 pm. Join us for refreshments and entertainment! Please let the Front Desk know how many will be in your party.

**May 15th Residents' Annual Fashion Show at 2 pm.** This yearly event is one of our most popular. Put on your finest and join us!

**May 13th-19th is National Skilled Nursing Care Week: Celebrating Life's Stories.** Every resident and staff member has his or her own unique stories of events in their lives. This week we'll be sharing and learning more about each other!

**May 28th Memorial Day Cookout at noon.** Enjoy live music and great food (\$5 per guest).

**June 1st-15th Summer Food Drive.** Please help us by donating nonperishable food items to support local food pantries. Simply drop off items in the lobby box. Thanks for your generosity!

**June 10th-17th National Nursing Assistants Week.** We thank all of our Nursing Assistants for the love and commitment they demonstrate every day in all the things they do for our residents. You are dearly appreciated!

**June 17th Father's Day Celebration at 2 pm.** Celebrate with your loved one and enjoy food, drinks, and live entertainment.

**Books & Magazines.** Donate your books and magazines, music CDs and DVDs. Most of our residents love to read and your donations support our Book Club. Many residents also love to watch their favorite classic films on movie night! We appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity!



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