

## Message from the President and CEO

Carol Annett ~ CEO & President, VHA Home HealthCare

Though it's been a brutally cold winter season, the heat is on at VHA! Most notable is our drive to ensure we get as many clients and family members on board to help us shape VHA services, programs and processes.



In fact, much of our first leadership meeting of the year was filled with amazing heart-warming stories from VHA clients and family members. The stories they shared were at once compelling, heart-breaking and inspirational. While client and family contributions have always been welcomed at VHA, we're passionate about incorporating more ideas, insights and feedback from clients and family members at every turn. From the ongoing work of our Client and Carer Advisory Council, to having clients as guest speakers as part of training, we're working on ensuring the client and family voice permeates all that we do.

And our clients are eager to share. The response from clients and caregivers to nominate a spectacular VHA worker for our newly minted "Client Choice Award" has been utterly overwhelming! People are anxious to tell us about their incredible bond with VHA workers and we're delighted to hear them. We'll no doubt be highlighting a handful of these stories in our next issue.

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*Client and Carer presentations at VHA's quarterly leadership meeting.*



*VHA client Michelle Amerie offered up an inspired presentation on living with Multiple Sclerosis.*



*Stacey Ryan (right) spoke on 16 years of receiving home care for her daughter Sadler (left), who passed away in 2014.*



### Another milestone:

These initiatives offer incredible opportunities and are a brilliant way to kick off VHA's 90th anniversary year. We're excited about celebrating our **legacy of innovation** that VHA's founder Barbara

Blackstock-Cody began back in 1925 when this organization consisted of 14 workers and a dream to support children at home when their mother was ill or absent.



*Barbara Blackstock-Cody:  
Founder of the Visiting  
Homemakers Association  
(V.H.A.)*

What a long way VHA has come since those early days! With over 2,000 staff and service providers throughout Ontario now offering a range of home health and community support services, I'm sure our founder would be as encouraged as we are about what lies ahead for VHA. Here's to the next 90 years – it is indeed a future of possibilities!



*The Visiting Homemakers Association (V.H.A.) also offered housekeeping classes to the community.*

*In our early days, there were only 14 housekeepers--now there are over 2,000 staff and service providers.*



## Steering VHA's Future of Possibilities



One of the most exciting developments to come from VHA's Client and Family Voice Committee is the creation of our **Client and Carer Advisory Council**. Five of the eight members

are VHA clients or caregivers who currently, or at one time, cared for a loved one receiving services from VHA.

The council's vision is to "act as the voice of the client in planning, developing or evaluating services," and to that end the group is full-speed ahead in putting these words into action! In a few short months the team has:

- Reviewed VHA's quality improvement initiatives and made recommendations.
- Advised on education that will help the organization improve the client experience as a whole.

- **Made suggestions** to enhance the contents of client safety education packages, marketing materials calling for client and family volunteers and VHA Voice—VHA's new newsletter aimed at clients and their caregivers.
- **Shared their personal stories** and home care experiences with our leadership team during VHA's first quarterly meeting.

We're proud to be at the forefront of involving clients and their caregivers in shaping home care. But we also know how important it is to keep "paying it forward." Just as Holland-Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital assisted VHA in the planning of client and family involvement, we're looking forward to advising fellow home care provider, Circle of Care on creating their own client and family advisory.

Undoubtedly with the support of our clients and carers, the possibilities for VHA's future are limitless!

# Extreme Cleaning Expands to Ottawa

In January, Champlain Rehab Solutions began offering Extreme Cleaning in Ottawa. The program helps people – many of whom suffer from mental health challenges – avoid impending eviction due to the unsanitary condition of their home.

Program feedback from over 40 Ottawa community agency representatives is incredibly positive and reveals a serious need for this service in Ottawa. The Extreme Cleaning team conducts an in-home assessment and does a thorough cleaning of the client's home to ensure it is liveable and safe. Staff also make referrals on behalf of the client for long-term support services and are sensitive to the needs of the person living with clutter. "It can be really stressful for clients to let someone in to deal with the unmanageable state of their home," notes Director, New Ventures & Community Programs, Cheryl Perera. "There are many different reasons their living space gets to this dire situation. Illness, trauma or a mental health issue can all be contributing factors, so it's important that our staff work with and involve clients throughout the cleaning and follow-up process.



Due to limited funding, the program is currently focused on serving a few high-need areas in the Ottawa core. "We hope however," says Perera, "to expand our services in the future to a broader area in the Champlain region."

If you would like to make a referral, please contact our Intake Social Worker, Emma Gallagher at 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4349.

## VHA Voice Newsletter Connects with Clients

The image shows the cover of the VHA Voice newsletter. It features a photograph of two people, a woman and a man, smiling. The title "VHA Voice" is prominently displayed in large, bold letters. Below the title, it says "ISSUE 2 ■ Winter ■ 2015". There are several text boxes on the cover, including one that says "Who is Barbara Blackstock-Cody?" and another that says "Nominate a VHA Worker for a Client Choice Award!". There is also a logo for "90 YEARS 1925-2015" with the tagline "A legacy of innovation, a future of possibilities." and a small text box that says "And while we hope that every worker provides spectacular client care, we know there are 'standouts.' People who go above and beyond to support you or your loved one. They're kind, dedicated and passionate, putting the needs of their clients and families first."

VHA Voice—a new quarterly newsletter aimed at clients and their caregivers—rolled out in February with over 10,000 issues in circulation.

The suggestion came directly from caregivers in a workgroup who felt a newsletter would help clients and family members learn more about VHA, its people and its initiatives.

VHA's Communications Department enlisted a small team of clients and caregivers to provide feedback on all aspects of the newsletter including content, look and feel, frequency and length. They agreed on a colourful two-page paper-based version that provides a mix of organizational updates, profiles of both workers and clients as well as caregiver tips and statistics. We'll be following up with clients and family members in the coming weeks to get further feedback and suggestions. Featured content in this issue included a call for nominations for our Staff and Service Provider Client Choice Awards.

Based on the overwhelming number of nominations to date with another week to go, it seems that clients and families are taking the time to take in VHA Voice! Take a look at [www.vha.ca/vhavoicenewsletter](http://www.vha.ca/vhavoicenewsletter)



# From Candidate to Designate: Prepping for a New Phase of BPSO



After three challenging but rewarding years as a Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) candidate, VHA is getting ready to throw our collective “caps” into the air at the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario’s (RNAO) Designation Ceremony on April 16, 2015. Our Board Chair, Adwoa K. Buahene, CEO, Carol Annett, Vice President Best Practices, Research and Education and Chief Nursing Executive, Bea Mudge will all be on hand for the event as will key members of VHA’s BPSO team.

Our designate status will also help to amplify our Staff and Service Provider Appreciation Events throughout the province this spring and we’re planning for special acknowledgement of this awesome achievement.

Of course BPSO designation is really just a marker in a journey that will continue for years to come. As part of our designate contract with the RNAO we’re committed to implementing two new Best Practice Guidelines for the year. In keeping with our strategic focus on enhancing our expertise in working with clients with cognitive impairments, we’ve selected: Screening for Delirium, Dementia in the Older Adult and Depression and Caregiving Strategies for Older Adults with Delirium, Dementia, and Depression.

We look forward to continuing to lead the way in applying Best Practice to the point-of-care to improve outcomes and ultimately, the client experience!

## SAVE THE DATE

### MANAGING HOARDING IN THE COMMUNITY PART III



**A WORKSHOP FOR THOSE FAMILIAR WITH HOARDING WHO WANT TO TAKE THEIR SKILLS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.**

**Location:** Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre  
McLaughlin Auditorium (E-Wing,  
Ground Floor, Room 18)

**Cost:** \$135

Thursday,  
June 11,  
2015

**PRESENTED BY:**



Creating More Independence




**Featuring:**

- **Peggy M.A. Richter, MD, FRCPC**, Head, Frederick W. Thompson Anxiety Disorders Centre, Department of Psychiatry, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- **Tim Guimond, MD, FRCPC**, Clinician-Researcher, St. Michael’s Hospital
- **Christiana Bratiotis, PhD, LICSW**, Assistant Professor, Grace Abbott School of Social Work, University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska USA

**For more information, please contact: Roberta Pludwinski at 416-561-9318 or [rpludwinski@rogers.com](mailto:rpludwinski@rogers.com)**

**Stay tuned for registration details!**



# Eye on Quality

## Eye on Quality: Improving Service Quality with Mobile Technology

In 2014, VHA focused on using technology to improve service to clients and staff satisfaction ratings by providing mobile devices and training to over 1,000 PSWs in the community. Our objects were to improve communication with our clients and between our field and office staff to reduce missed visits, and make client information accessible at the point of care.

PSWs can now communicate with clients and the office directly while on the road, easily documenting what is important to their clients in the client record. We are also excited to see strong evidence of improvement in our rate of missed visits, an important indicator of service quality and safety. This rate is less than half of what it used to be and has remained consistently low since April 2014.

The devices have worked so well for PSWs that VHA now offers the same devices and connectivity to our Shift Nurses and is also piloting an electronic health care application for wound care. That application encourages the use of “best practice” in treatment of wounds and has been a success with both nurses and clients who like to see the recorded progress of their wounds.

Technology and electronic applications are becoming part of mainstream operations at VHA and we know staff and service providers will benefit from improved efficiencies and access to information. Most importantly, our clients experience improved service quality and better outcomes of care.



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Heart of Home Care Award Presentation

Save the Date! May 11, 2015

### VHA's 2014 Heart of Home Care Winners



Victoria Willis (centre) with nominators from the Alzheimer Society of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Jan White, President (left) and Vicki Poffley, Executive Director (right).



Pamela Andrews and her son Aidan.



Left to right: VHA CEO Carol Annett, Kazumi Alsemgeest and David Alsemgeest.



Joyce Nunn and her son Michael Sean Gardner.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:





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30 Soudan Avenue, Suite 600, Toronto, ON M4S 1V6



A DIVISION OF VHA HOME HEALTHCARE



VHA Home HealthCare has no corporate or other affiliation with VHA Health & Home Support, also known as VHA Ottawa. VHA Health & Home Support can be reached through their website at www.vhaottawa.ca.



United Way  
Member Agency



Visit our website at [www.vha.ca](http://www.vha.ca)

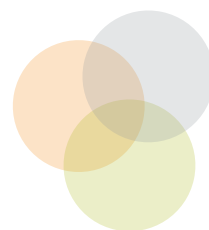
All of our services are available at home, school, in hospital or a long-term care facility.

### VHA PROVIDES:

- Adult and elder care
- Child and family care
- Respite or caregiver/family relief
- Palliative care
- Mental health support
- Foot care
- Attendant care
- Extreme cleaning
- Information and referral services
- Supplementary staffing in care facilities
- Supportive housing
- Consultation and education

### VHA PROFESSIONAL STAFF/ SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Dietitians
- Occupational Therapists
- Personal Support Workers/Homemakers
- Physiotherapists
- Registered Nurses/Registered Practical Nurses/Nurse Practitioners
- Social Workers
- Rehab Assistants
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Client Service Coordinators/Supervisors



VHA Home HealthCare is a member agency of United Way Toronto and a contracted provider with Toronto Central, Central, Central East, Central West, South West, Mississauga Halton, Champlain, and Erie St. Clair CCACs, the City of Toronto's Homemakers and Nurses Services program and the Regional Municipality of Durham.

## We welcome your support!

### Membership

VHA welcomes new associate members and encourages people in the community to get involved with VHA. Our membership fee of \$25 can be waived in special circumstances. Please contact Patricia Triantafilou at 416.482.4617 or [patricia@vha.ca](mailto:patricia@vha.ca).

### Donation

Charitable donations to VHA Home HealthCare make a meaningful difference in the lives of people in need. Donations are welcome online, by mail, phone or in person. Our sincerest thanks for your generosity.

**Comments or Suggestions?** Contact the editor of Community Care Connection

**Pamela Stoikopoulos** : 416.489.2500 x4344 or 1.888.314.6622 email: [pstoik@vha.ca](mailto:pstoik@vha.ca)

Available in other accessible formats on request.