



Message from the CEO and President

Carol Annett ~ CEO & President, VHA Home HealthCare



These are exciting times at VHA! The biggest change of late is the relocation of our head office to 30 Soudan Avenue at the end of September. It's just a hop, skip and a jump from Eglinton subway station on the Yonge-University line.

Though the move had us living out of boxes for a few weeks, the transition was, thankfully, a smooth one. It not only offers us a permanent home to call our own, but its central location makes it much easier for our Toronto area staff and service providers to get to us for training and meetings.

The bricks and mortar, however, aren't the only things changing at VHA. In the early summer we enlisted the support of Blueprint Business Architecture (www.theblueprint.ca) and its two founders Ian Chamandy and Ken Aber to help us answer the question "why choose us?" in seven words or less. They came highly recommended, having worked with the likes of Rotman School of Management, Baycrest, Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Famous People's Players and the CN Tower, bringing a newfound clarity and direction to these organizations.

It was a fascinating, challenging and sometimes grueling process that—over the course of three months—brought a small team of VHA senior managers together to discuss,

debate and create a powerful, unique and meaningful core proposition for our organization. The fruits of our labour have not only shaped our new Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs revealed in this issue, but will continue to influence strategic planning for 2011-2013 and our aspirations as an industry leader and innovator. We hope after reading *Blueprinting: A Design for VHA's Future* you'll agree we're heading into some pretty inspiring territory.

As our 85th year comes to a close, there's indeed a lot to be proud of: our rich history, the fantastic group of professionals responsible for VHA's excellent reputation, and an organization that cares deeply about helping the individuals and families we are here to serve. Most exciting, though, is the work to come for VHA. The plans are drawn, the foundation is solid and with this new blueprint in hand, VHA is ready and eager to tell the world how we make a difference and why they should undoubtedly choose us.

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 416.489.2500 or patricia@vha.ca.

Donations

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.

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Blueprinting

A design for VHA's future

What makes VHA unique? How is our support of clients different from other organizations? How do we ensure everyone—VHA staff, service providers, partners and funders—stays on the same page as we move towards more integrated care? Most importantly, why should people choose us?

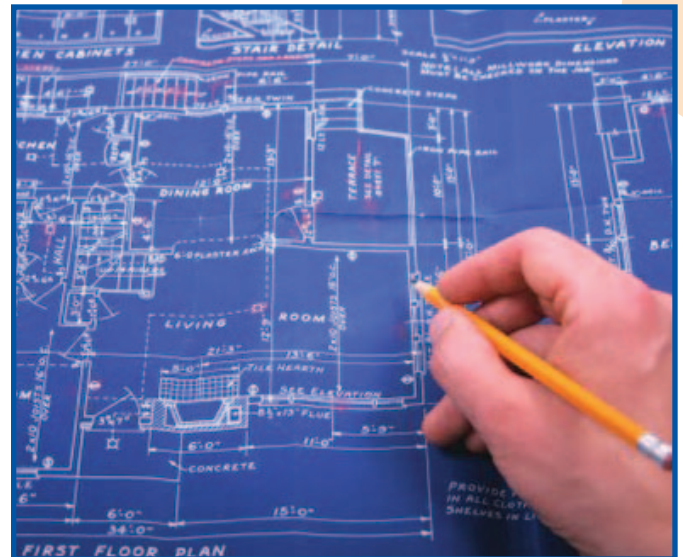
These were the challenging questions posed to and answered by a core group of the senior management team with the support of Blueprint Business Architecture—a dynamic, unconventional duo of consultants brought on earlier this year to help us reflect on and refine VHA's raison d'être. The blueprinting process began in the summer and, after months of defining, refining and refining some more, is being rolled out to all our staff and service providers.

The Goals of Blueprinting

While the idea of blueprinting may seem abstract at first blush, the journey and its goals are relatively straightforward. VHA blueprinted to:

- Better understand VHA's core DNA and where the organization wants to go.
- Create a simpler and clearer purpose for VHA so we're all on the same page about our goals, aspirations, focus and direction.
- Re-inspire everyone within VHA and renew our commitment to VHA's reason for being.
- Help us distinguish ourselves from others in the field.

At the end of the process a core proposition or “mantra” that answers the question, “Why choose us?” emerges: **all in seven words or less**. This key statement distils our insights, ideas and direction for VHA and wraps it into a clear, concise and memorable message that everyone—be they partners, funders, clients and their families or our own staff and service providers—understands and is inspired by.



More Independence at VHA

As we established and articulated the “truths” of VHA and the home care industry, one clear theme reappeared: **More Independence**. This notion surfaced again and again—regardless of the service, program or goals we discussed—until it could no longer be ignored. It starts with the fundamental belief that our services provide people with the possibility for more independence within their current situation. These “truths” come from research, client experience and anecdotal evidence, including the insights of VHA staff and service providers. At their core is the understanding that our clients are in the “driver’s seat” in shaping their own personal definition of **More Independence** and its application within their care situation. It also acknowledges that clients have a choice to aim for as much or as little independence as they choose.

More Independence recognizes that VHA helps people stay at home, school or work and remain part of their community, and that this very act gives people a feeling of control over their lives and care. We believe this element of control gives people options and a sense of dignity and self worth that they might not otherwise have. We also view living at home, going to school/work and participating in the community as the embodiment of **More Independence**.

The Change and Inspiration of *More Independence*

The blueprint team knew it had uncovered VHA's DNA in *More Independence*. These two words resonate on many levels. *More Independence* acknowledges and pays homage to our rich history, embraces the breadth and depth of our current basket of services and shifts to more integrated care, and ultimately respects our commitment to serving the most vulnerable in the community. It addresses the notion of "burden"—whether real or perceived—that people try intensely to avoid. In other words, the more we can help a person to live independently, the less of a "burden," emotionally, physically and financially, they'll feel to themselves, their families and to society. Most importantly, *More Independence* puts our clients—their ideas, preferences and goals—at

the centre of everything we do and celebrates "home" as a powerful symbol of independence and control for our clients.

More Independence also struck a chord because it's clearly something VHA staff and service providers have been intuitively working towards since our founding in 1925. Eighty five years ago when VHA stepped into homes to help families where the mother was ill or absent, we were supporting these families to remain independent and avoid institutionalization. *More Independence* is undoubtedly in our bones. The blueprinting process, however, has given it a clear, powerful and inspirational voice. It's the "filter" through which we'll view everything—including our strategic plan, service delivery, internal operations, partnerships, training, mission, vision, beliefs and client goals. *More Independence* takes a loose conceptual

Our work with blueprinting was the stone from which our exciting new **Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs** were cast. We're excited to introduce them to you here.

Vision

Everyone receives community support and home health care when, where and how they want it.

Mission

Creating possibilities for more independence.

Core Beliefs

Our care must be:

- **Spectacular** and continuously focused on quality improvement and safety.
- **Client-driven**, because what matters most to clients is what counts.
- **Integrated and collaborative** to unearth innovative answers to complex challenges.
- **Inclusive and committed** to serving the most vulnerable in our communities.
- **Inspired and creative**, delivered by a skilled team that has tremendous heart.

As a charitable not-for-profit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors, VHA is committed to:

- Fiscal responsibility.
- Ethical practices in all our operations.
- Driving positive change in community support and home health care.



ideal that always existed within VHA and makes it tangible, actionable and measurable.

Moving Towards *More Independence*

Though the groundwork of the blueprint is complete, the real challenge lies in taking *More Independence* and weaving its thread through every level and aspect of our organization. Its application will take thought, creativity, energy and time. Steps forward were already made this October when we viewed our existing Vision, Mission and Values through the *More Independence* filter. The result is a clearer, more succinct and client-centred Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs that we're delighted to introduce to you here.

More Independence is not only front and centre in our work on our 2011-2013 strategic planning but will also reframe our conversations and relationships—whether it's developing client goals, determining which projects VHA pursues or partnering with other agencies to provide more integrated care and maximize efficiencies.

Ultimately though, the blueprint steers us in a distinct direction that builds on VHA's strengths and helps us scrutinize every process, interaction and step we take to ensure we're supporting the goal of *More Independence* for our clients.



Eye on Quality

Update on Quality Improvement in 2010

Client Surveys

At VHA client-centred care is a core belief. This means that clients must experience the best service possible: service that is delivered with competence and compassion.

How do we evaluate our clients' experience? We ask.

Managers and supervisors personally check in with our clients by telephone or home visits. We also provide formal surveys to our VHA clients to understand their experience, and in turn, improve the quality of our services.

In the third quarter of 2010 we upgraded our survey system. VHA is one of only two service provider agencies in Ontario contracted with Ipsos Reid Public Affairs (Ipsos), the same research firm used by our CCAC partners. Our client survey tool is a shorter version of the survey used by the CCACs. Because the surveys have questions in common, Ipsos provides us with feedback from an even

greater number of our clients. The thorough methodology Ipsos uses improves the reliability and validity of survey results for VHA so we can better monitor our clients' experience in all core service areas.

Broad Communication of Performance Results

Regular reports to VHA's management team and Board of Directors keep them informed on progress in achieving quality and safety improvements and objectives. Individual and team performance reports are also sent to supervisors and frontline staff.

VHA monitors all contracted service areas to ensure we consistently meet performance targets set internally and by our CCAC funders. We share results at multiple levels so everyone in the organization knows when we can celebrate our achievements and what we need to improve.

Breaking news and updates

Changes to Client Services

Deborah Simon, our former Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President, Client Services, left us in October after 12 years of service at VHA. We wish Deborah all the best as she joins the Toronto Community Housing Corporation as their Chief Operating Officer.

We're delighted to announce that Barbara Cawley, former Executive Director of VHA Rehab Solutions, has been appointed Vice President, Client Services.



This change brings nursing, personal support and rehabilitation services under the same Client Services leader. Not only will this help VHA on its journey towards more integrated services, but it's also an asset as the industry moves towards a population-based care model.

We're also actively searching for a new senior leader for the role of Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations for Nursing and Personal Support.

Child and Family Specialty Program Now Offered to Personal Support Staff

VHA recently introduced a Child and Family Specialty Program to further enhance the knowledge and skills of our talented Personal Support staff to ensure they provide the best paediatric care to our young clients with disabilities.

The program helps PSWs learn how to deal with a host of paediatric care issues like communicating with a child with sensory disabilities, responding in life-threatening situations and the ethical and legal issues of reporting child abuse. Classes also feature speakers from The Canadian Hearing Society, Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy, Geneva Centre for Autism, VHA Rehab Solutions and VHA nursing and supervisory staff.

Feedback from PSWs is extremely positive and many workers noted their interest in receiving ongoing training like this to further their paediatric skills.

Comments or Suggestions?

Contact the editor of Community Care Connection

Pam Stoikopoulos : 416.489.2500 x4344 or 1.888.314.6622 email: pstoik@vha.ca

VHA Finalist at Health Expo

VHA Home HealthCare's *SAFESTART* training program was honoured as one of three finalists for a Minister's Award of Excellence—Improving Safety category at the *Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo* this past November. The expo is an annual event that showcases new and creative improvements to the Ontario health care system.



SAFESTART teaches Personal Support Workers (PSWs) how to prevent errors caused by rushing and/or not having “mind or eyes on task”—the main reasons identified for near misses and significant safety incidents—to improve staff and client safety.

The program launched in September 2009 in Toronto-Central. To date more than 120 PSWs have graduated from the 10-hour program. VHA will continue *SAFESTART* training in other regions starting in January 2011.



Visit our website at www.vha.ca



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

VHA SERVICES

- 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
- Social Workers
- 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.



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