Letter from the Office of the Acting President and CEO, Visiting Nurse Associations of America and ElevatingHOME

Dear Members,

*Evolution—at times occurring imperceptibly slow and other times in a flash—is a constant of nature.*

The home-based care industry is experiencing change and growth at all levels. Mergers and acquisitions, new products and services, regulatory changes, shifting demographics, changing alliances, innovative payment models, evolving technology, and new measurements are all roiling the waters of the industry. These changes create new opportunities in home-based care daily. Successful providers remain focused on their patients and stakeholders, while simultaneously staying adaptive, responsive, and creative as the industry evolves. The Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) and ElevatingHOME remain committed to this philosophy.

After the excitement of ElevatingHOME’s launch in July 2017, our attention quickly turned to bringing its vision to life. The vision—a unified home-based care industry, meeting the demands of those seeking to achieve wellness and independence at home—is an aspirational goal in need of concrete steps. To tackle it, we followed your lead, staying focused on you—our members and stakeholders—and measuring successes along the way.

We streamlined internal operations, allowing us to maintain stable agency member rates for the fourth consecutive year. We increased our member email database by 200 percent, providing us the opportunity to interact with a greater number of people across our member network. Our full database, including members and non-members, more than tripled to over 18,000, enabling us to share our important message across the industry.

We have continued our strong legacy of advocacy and clinical excellence in 2018. We responded to 17 congressional, regulatory, and federal policy initiatives so far this year, ensuring key decision-makers hear your voice. The 20th edition of the *VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual* (CPM) exceeded its annual sales goal in July 2018. Through our unique partnership with Elsevier Health Sciences, we developed the *Hospice and Palliative Care Skills Collection* as an extension of the CPM, available for sale now.

The following pages detail many of the new, concrete steps taken to realize our shared vision. In 2019, we will continue to evolve while remaining focused on following your lead. We will continue to bring our members the very best in education, networking, collaboration, and advocacy where and when it is most convenient for you. We are committed to embracing new technology, new partners, and creating innovative methods to meet the needs of your organization. Expect more digital opportunities, easily accessible tools and resources, increased flexibility, and more real-time interaction focused on critical industry issues.

As the Acting President and CEO of both VNAA and ElevatingHOME, I am proud to serve you and look forward to meeting you in your home.

Danielle Pierotti, RN, PhD, CENP
Acting President and CEO
VNAA and ElevatingHOME
Dear Members,

Happy 35th birthday to VNAA!

Celebrating our 35th birthday is a valuable moment to pause and consider how VNAA has grown. In 1983, we were learning to use CD ROMs, mobile phones were still in suitcases, cigarettes were smoked in schools, restaurants, and hospitals, and Mark Zuckerberg had not even been born. In home health care, proprietary agencies first entered the market and, as an industry, we were busy adapting to OBRA 81; which allowed us to start caring for people without a prior hospitalization. President Reagan signed the Medicare Hospice Benefit into law, bringing choice to the end of life for Americans. In the midst of all this change, a small group of home health and hospice leaders joined together to ensure the unique voice of the nonprofit, community-based agencies, committed to serving the most vulnerable, remained an active part of the federal conversation.

Today, we carry advanced computers in our pockets, cigarettes cannot be smoked in public buildings, and Mark Zuckerberg is ubiquitous in our lives. Home health serves over 17 million people a year, with over half never entering the hospital to initiate care. Hospice care supports over 40% of all Medicare beneficiaries in the last days of their lives. VNAA members continue to lead the home-based care industry, expanding the conversation across all providers of home health and hospice services.

Continued professional collaboration despite sustained industry upheaval, ensuring people everywhere have access to high-quality care at home, is a testament to the vision and strength of VNAA. In today’s hyper-divided environment, VNAA’s members are a role model for focusing on the greater good, partnering with like-minded people, and moving forward for the betterment of all.

It is my honor to serve you and lead VNAA with the hopes of embracing the next 35 years with the same spirit of community, commitment, and optimism that has defined us since the beginning.

Kate Rolf, MBA, CHCE, FACHE
Chair
Visiting Nurse Associations of America
Dear Members,

Happy 1st birthday to ElevatingHOME!

After many years of planning and building, it is startling that ElevatingHOME has only existed officially for one year. This anniversary is important and provides a chance to reflect on the journey we took together to get where we are today. In an industry facing major payment upheaval, changing alliances, public scrutiny, and increasing patient need, embarking on a new coalition, seeking a wider variety of voices, and taking more risks to shape the future was nothing short of daring.

In the face of tumultuous times, many choose the safe route and strive to protect what is known. VNAA choose to embrace the unknown, take risks, and lead by doing. Moving forward as team to create and define the future the home-based industry has been challenging and rewarding. Some risks moved us forward further than we hoped, some dropped us back a few yards. The real rewards are still ahead of us. As we continue to build networks, explore options, and create new opportunities for our members and the patients we all serve, we remain committed to the principles of unifying the home-based care industry, and providing care in the patient’s preferred location—home.

The work we do together, as ElevatingHOME, has already impacted how care is delivered in homes, how payment is structured, how alliances are developed, and how new research is conceived and utilized. The vision that culminated in the creation of ElevatingHOME is reflected in the following pages. I invite you to look at where we have been this year and help us create the future.

In my role as Chair of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your trust. As a leader in home-based care, I thank you for the shared commitment to our industry’s future.

Joseph Scopelliti, Jr.
Chair
ElevatingHOME
Welcome to VNAA and ElevatingHOME

ElevatingHOME and its subsidiary, Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA), are member-led organizations who support, promote, and advocate for the critical role of mission-driven home-based care providers. Our goal is to align, unify, and strengthen the home-based care industry. We envision home-based care as an integral component of high-quality health care delivery models.

We support our members through an array of services and benefits designed to help you run the most efficient and effective home-based care agency possible. Through advocacy, education, thought leadership, valuable cost savings, and collaborative networking opportunities, we provide essential services and support needed to accomplish your goals and solve your biggest challenges.

How we serve you:

- Advocacy and Engagement
- Collaborative Networking
- Cost Savings
- Education
- Thought Leadership

2018 Accomplishments

National Leadership Conference (NLC)

The 2018 National Leadership Conference (NLC) took place March 7-9 in Washington, DC and marked several firsts for the home-based care industry. NLC 2018 welcomed participants from 112 organizations across 34 states, both in-person and virtually. For the first time, NLC was available for live-streaming, making the event fully accessible to members everywhere.

ElevatingHOME’s first research group presented preliminary results from their study during the session “Moving from Research to Quality.” Dr. Steven Strongwater, President and CEO of Atrius Health, opened the session describing the positive impact of a partnership between primary care and home health. Dr. Berna Demiralp of KNG Health Consulting, LLC, Dr. Danielle Pierotti of VNAA and ElevatingHOME, and Ian Juliano of Excel Health presented the preliminary results from their original research on national home health financial data. Over the next several days, expert care providers, researchers, partner associations, regulators, policymakers, insurers, investors, and corporate partners presented 23 sessions and actively networked in the newly-designed open marketplace, sharing unique ideas and innovations in the home-based care industry.
Policy Engagement

The VNAA and ElevatingHOME advocacy team expanded member access to policy development through multiple engagement opportunities. Members received timely and relevant policy updates through Public Policy Town Hall calls, the Public Policy Committee Steering Council, and our weekly Member Update newsletter. Additional analysis of proposed, pending or newly enacted rules, regulations, and legislation became available on the website and in the member-only online communities.

Tools and guidance to calculate the impact of the Home Health Groupings Model (HHGM) and Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM) legislation have been widely accessed. Individual consultations were provided to more than 20 percent of the membership, offering personalized guidance to agencies and corporate partners alike, on the interpretation and impact of pending legislation. Averaging two Capitol Hill visits a week, Joy Cameron, Vice President of Policy and Innovation, has established ElevatingHOME as a steady presence in Congress. Melanie Morris, RN, MSN, MBA, Vice President of Home Health at North Carolina-based Advanced Home Care, joined Joy as an invited member of the Home Health Prospective Payment System Technical Expert Panel, ensuring a seat at the table with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for mission-driven home health.

Research

In 2018, ElevatingHOME embarked upon several projects to develop new knowledge in home-based care. Premiering at NLC 2018, “The Value of Home Health,” original research evaluating the readmissions, cost, and mortality rates for patients who choose home health when recommended at hospital discharge compared to those who do not, is scheduled to conclude in late 2018.

Drs. Bruce Leff, Orla Sheehan, and Cynthia Boyd from John's Hopkins University Medical Center welcomed Dr. Pierotti to join a funded project examining the interdisciplinary communication in home health. Phase one, a qualitative study will conclude in 2018 and inform a new survey of RNs and therapists in home health about communication with ordering providers. Dr. Pierotti consulted with the research team at SimpleC. Working with the Visiting Nurse Health System in Atlanta, results have been reported to the National Institutes of Health from Personalized Assistive Technology for Independent Living at Home. Public release is expected soon.

Finally, ElevatingHOME and Smith & Nephew have designed and initiated the first of its kind prevalence study of wounds in home health with AlaCare Home Health and Hospice, Trinity Health at Home, and Homecare Homebase.
**Say “Boo!” to the Flu**

Now in its 13th year, the annual Halloween-themed Say “Boo!” to the Flu program, in partnership with the Clorox Company, brings support and supplies to member agencies empowering them to serve their communities with low-cost flu vaccinations in the early fall. This year saw a 15 percent increase in participating agencies with over 17,000 doses of vaccine scheduled for delivery through affiliated events. Say “Boo!” to the Flu events provide an opportunity for members of the community to get their family vaccinated against the seasonal flu, and to learn simple tricks to prevent the spread of the virus.

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**Public Policy Leadership Series (PPLS)**

In response to a member need for real-time, web-accessible education, the Public Policy Leadership Conference (PPLC) changed formats, becoming the Public Policy Leadership Series (PPLS) in 2018. The six-week, web-based live-to-recorded format program, runs weekly from October 3 through November 7, 2018.

PPLS is already enjoying a 200 percent increase in registration over PPLC 2017, with more than 15 percent of registrants from agencies who are not currently members of VNAA and ElevatingHOME. An impressive lineup of speakers from across the country, representing providers, legislators, payors, and association leaders fill the program’s agenda. PPLS participants will receive the downloadable Advocacy Toolkit with general advocacy guidance and topic-specific handouts designed to share education and direct advocacy engagement at both the local and national levels.

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**Workforce**

Building a vibrant home-based care workforce is an industrywide challenge. In 2018, our support for member agencies’ workforce development continued on multiple fronts. In addition to building a robust library of resources for home health leaders, new webinars have tackled precepting, onboarding, retention, and organizational culture. New partners have brought our members educational opportunities for staff development at discounted rates. These educational opportunities include case management certification programs from Fazzi Associates, quality and patient safety certification programs from the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ), and on-demand virtual continuing education from MedBridge. In November 2018, results from the first discussion between agency nurse leaders and nursing educators examining the status of new graduate nurses in home-based care will provide insight and pose next steps to improve nurse preparation.
Network Building

Representing our members across a breadth of industry-related activities is a core commitment. In 2018, VNAA and ElevatingHOME engaged in a wide variety of committees, coalitions, and networks that work to further the interests of home-based care. Increasing the visibility of home as a setting for care, national industry topics and issues, and policy changes are key focuses as we continue representing home-based care in increasingly larger circles. VNAA and ElevatingHOME are currently involved with the following networks:

- The Home Health Coalition
- The Better Medicare Alliance
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- National Quality Forum Opioid Stewardship Action Team
- CMS Electronic Medical Documentation Interoperability Program
- Coalition to Transform Advanced Care
- The Disability and Aging Coalition
- Initiative to Map Community Palliative Care
- Patient Quality of Life Coalition
- NCQA- Serious Illness Panel
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement Medication Optimization in Primary Care
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement and National Patient Safety Foundation - Safety at Home Report

VNAA Leadership Academy

The VNAA Leadership Academy supports the development of new leadership in home-based care through newly developed and easily accessible web-based modules. Premiering in November 2018, the first chapter “Financial Management in Home-Based Care,” presented by CliftonLarsonAllen, will provide key lessons to build strong financial understanding of new leaders in home health and hospice care.

The VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual, Hospice and Palliative Care Skills Collection

Launching in October 2018, the Hospice and Palliative Care Skills Collection, an extension of the VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual (CPM), provides clear focus on key, specialized care of people at the end of life. Designed as a supplement to the 20th edition of the CPM, the Hospice and Palliative Care Skills Collection is the first joint product created with Elsevier Health Sciences. This partnership increases flexibility and connectivity for users. Users can choose between a traditional book publication and a fully searchable, web-based application which includes a full staff competency program. As part of the Mosby online procedure manual family, users can ensure matched, best practice for their patients across settings. The 21st Edition of the CPM will be available in the same format in the summer of 2019.
The success of our work relies on the ability to communicate with current members, future members, and industry partners. In 2018, we made great strides across numerous platforms. Our social media following increases nearly every day, achieving an average of 600 impressions daily between Twitter and Facebook over the last six months. Recipients increasingly open more emails and engage with our ads in industry journals and publications, leading to a 5 percent increase over the last three months. This increased visibility has resulted in record high registration numbers for PPLS, a 300 percent increase in database contacts, over 3,000 webinar participants, and a 6 percent increase in VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual sales to non-members.

Meet the Team

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