

VNA

Visiting Nurse Associations of America

Elevating
HOME



2019

Annual Report

Aligning, unifying, and strengthening the home-based health care industry.

www.vnaa.org

www.elevatinghome.org



Visiting Nurse Associations of America and ElevatingHOME

VNAA/EH Colleagues and Friends,

As another year concludes, we are amazed at how much has taken place for VNAA/EH and for our members over the past year. As a leading resource for clinical information and guidance for home health and hospice agencies across the country, VNAA/EH continued its legacy of providing high quality education and leadership.

In 2019, we released the 21st edition of our award winning VNAA's Clinical Procedure Manual. Much thanks to many of our members for their contributions to the publication, which is available through Elsevier Publishing and through VNAA in hard copy. Additionally, we completed the "Blueprint for Excellence," a collaboratively developed peer-reviewed tool to identify best practices in Home Health, Hospice and Palliative Care. Throughout the year, a multitude of clinical, quality, financial, and practical educational programs have been provided via webinars and in person, and many continue to be available online as excellent resources for your team to access.

One of our most significant achievements is our partnership with LeadingAge which has allowed VNAA/EH to further enhance the key benefits we provide our membership. Our relationship has provided us with more impactful advocacy, greater networking opportunities, incredible thought leadership, education, and cost savings. If you have not had the opportunity to learn about LeadingAge, please take the opportunity to utilize your membership, by obtaining the logon to their site, and take advantage of the many resources provided there as well, because as a VNAA/EH member, you are now also a member of LeadingAge.

If you were not able to attend the VNAA/EH Education Track at the LeadingAge Annual Meeting and Expo in San Diego, I hope to see you in Washington this spring, or next fall in San Antonio. Not only is it a wonderful opportunity to network with other VNAA/EH members, but it provides opportunities to do the same with other LeadingAge members. Together, our organizations will continue to further align and provide our members with the highest level of support in ways that are most meaningful to them. So, please reach out and let us know your thoughts, ideas, and help us make this partnership as effective as it can be!

Finally, we want to thank Katie Smith Sloan for her leadership and guidance in serving in the role as interim president and CEO during this first year of transition. We look forward to our continued collaboration.

Joseph Scopelliti, Jr.
Chair
ElevatingHOME

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



Introduction

2019 was a year of alignment in which VNAA and ElevatingHOME (VNAA/EH) members saw the organizations continue to offer robust advocacy for home health, home care, and hospice organizations to support their delivery of high-quality, evidence-based care. In addition, through its intended alignment with LeadingAge, a national organization of 6,000+ members and partners representing the entire field of aging services, VNAA/EH will offer members extensive new benefits and an expanded advocacy team. During this period of transition, members of VNAA/EH have been appointed to the LeadingAge board of directors, and vice versa.

As we established a more coordinated policy approach for home health and hospice, we also launched a number of initiatives that define our signature collaborative approach to improving quality and effectiveness in home-based care.

- Some highlights of 2019 include:
- Submitted a joint letter of comment with LeadingAge on the CY 2020 Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update Proposed Rule and submitted comments on FY2020 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update and Hospice Quality Reporting Requirements.
- Collaborated with national organizations advocating for home-based health and hospice care on policy as well as best practices for patient care.
- Tracked the implementation of the Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM) payment model and offered ongoing training to support members in making the transition.
- Convened thought leaders to discuss challenges and opportunities in recruiting and retaining nurses in home health and hospice and will shortly release two new chapters in the highly regarded resource tool, the VNAA/EH *Blueprint for Excellence*.
- Released the 21st Edition of the award-winning VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual in publishing partnership with Elsevier Publishing Company.
- Added value to VNAA/EH members and partners through programs such as 'Say "Boo" to the Flu,' vaccine purchasing discounts and members-only education.
- Extended LeadingAge member benefits to VNAA/EH members.
- Increased the voice of home health and hospice through our work with LeadingAge.



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**

2019 Accomplishments

Expanded Membership Benefits

Resulting from our intent to affiliate with LeadingAge, VNAA/EH members received access to LeadingAge member resources and benefits in addition to those offered by VNAA/EH Members can access the latest home health and hospice information, tools and guidance through the LeadingAge website, delivered through four key centers:

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.

2019 Accomplishments

- [Center for Aging Services Technologies \(CAST\)](#): leads the charge to expedite the development, evaluation, and adoption of emerging technologies that can improve quality, increase efficiency and enhance service delivery. Majd Alwan, Ph.D., guides CAST as its executive director.
- [Center for Workforce Solutions](#): Workforce is a strategic priority of LeadingAge. The Center, created in 2017 is a hub for relevant information and resources: promising practices, ideas for key partnerships, tools to calculate turnover, presentation materials, fact sheets, member testimonials, podcasts, policy news and more. Members receive the monthly “Workforce Matters” email news brief to stay abreast of key issues. Susan Hildebrandt, VP workforce initiatives, is the Center’s leader.
- [Center for Managed Care Solutions & Innovations](#): This Center serves as a clearinghouse for information, resources, networking, and assistance about the relationship between managed care, both Medicare and Medicaid, and post-acute and long-term services and supports providers. The Center offers information, education, and tools needed to participate in managed care, integrated service delivery, and alternative payment models. Nicole Fallon, VP, health policy and integrated services, guides the Center’s activities.
- [LTSS Center @UMass Boston](#): The Center was created in May 2017 when LeadingAge joined with the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston to expand work in applied research. The Center, from offices in Washington, DC and Boston, MA, collaborates with the Center for Consumer Engagement in Health Innovation at Community Catalyst. It blends the expertise of academic researchers at UMass Boston with LeadingAge’s applied research team to bridge policy and practice. Areas of focus include workforce, housing plus services, quality, financing, aging and health, and engagement. Robyn Stone, LeadingAge’s SVP, research, is co-director.

National Leadership Conference

The March 2019 National Leadership Conference focused on the shift from volume to value in healthcare, with a focus on implications for home health and hospice. Speakers focused on how care in the home will become an increasingly crucial component of healthcare in the future. Participants learned about ‘The 4 P’s of value-based payment’: patients as empowered consumers, providers as navigators of care, preventing worsening symptoms and paying for outcomes. Leaders in home-based care discussed strategies to closely align care with research and analytics while meeting policy/regulatory requirements and most importantly, delivering patient care in the home.

Home Health and Hospice Policy and Advocacy

The VNAA/EH advocacy team expanded member access to home health and hospice policy engagement by sharing information and encouraging active member involvement. Expert staff and consultants hosted Public Policy Town Hall member calls and offered weekly policy updates in our Member Update e-newsletter. We also offered members expert analysis of proposed, pending and newly enacted rules, regulations, and legislation, providing up-to-date information on our website and in member-only communications.

Through the efforts of Rubin Associates and Palladino Consultants, VNAA/EH worked directly on Capitol Hill and with our numerous partners and coalitions. We also partnered with LeadingAge to ensure consistency and alignment to our responses to critical CMS proposed policy impacting home health and hospice. VNAA/EH developed a joint letter of comment with LeadingAge, [Comments on Proposed Rule: CY 2020 Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update](#) and also submitted comments on [FY2020 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update and Hospice Quality Reporting Requirements](#).

Our members sent over 250 emails to elected officials in support of the Home Health Payment Innovation Act of 2019. In addition, we have advocated for the following: support for the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act, Community-based Institutional Special Needs Plan, Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act, The National Nurse Act of 2019, Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act, Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act, Rural Access to Hospice Act, and the Patient Choice and Quality Care Act.

Advocacy Coalitions

In addition to our internal analysis and advocacy, the VNAA/EH policy team interacts with numerous organizations to expand our presence and continue to provide best practices for our members. Here are just a few of the organizations we worked with on a regular basis in 2019:

- Coalition to Transform Advanced Care
- National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- Medicare Home Health Working Group
- PDGM – Patient Driven Grouping Model Preparation

VNAA/EH helped members to prepare for the transformative Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM) slated for implementation in January 2020. PDGM constitutes the most comprehensive set of operational, clinical, and financial imperatives for home health agencies since the introduction of the Prospective Payment System (PPS). It will require significant shifts in the approach that agencies of all sizes take to delivering care, evaluating patient outcomes, billing for services, and sustaining operations.

In October 2019 VNAA/EH offered the *PDGM Webinar Series Part 2 - Are You Ready for PDGM?* The series includes 4 1-hour webinars exploring different components of PDGM, delivering the tools you need to assess your strengths and master PDGM independently. This advanced series built on an introductory series in April 2019 introducing members to the basics of PDGM and outlining the first stages of preparation. Over 90 agencies joined expert Sharon Harder of C3 Advisors for 9 hours of web-based learning for advanced preparation for PDGM. Through these intensive sessions, VNAA/EH provided participants with a plan and tools to ensure smooth transition to the new model. The two PDGM learning series are available for purchase for those unable to participate in the live sessions.

Public Policy Leadership Series 2019

The Public Policy Leadership Series will take place in November 2019, using the successful digital format offered in 2018. The 2019 PPLS webinar series, **Evidence: The Bridge Between Practice and Policy** will explore the application of evidence in public policy, with a focus on helping clinical professionals engage in advocacy. After the passage of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, the development, use, and evaluation of evidence has taken center stage for legislative and regulatory action.

PPLS 2019 explores the intersection of healthcare practice and public policy in local, state, federal, and global issues. Staff are working with Chamberlain University, the Bipartisan Policy Center, and elected officials. The premise of PPLS 2019 is that healthcare professionals are experts in the discovery, application, and refinement of evidence in practice. PPLS 2019 features experts in both policy and clinical care. In the kick-off session, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), the longest serving registered nurse in Congress talks with Danielle Pierotti, RN, PhD, CENP, former vice president of auality and research at VNAA/EH, on the relationship between clinical practice and elected office as part of the series.

Improving Quality and Safety in Home Care

Workforce

In 2019 VNAA/EH continued to define and develop solutions for nurse workforce challenges in home health. We published a white paper examining the state of new graduate registered nurses (RNs) in home-based care. VNAA/EH noted an increased demand for talented individuals to provide clinical care. The report of these initiatives, [New Graduates in Home-Based Care](#), summarizes expert opinions from nurse leaders in home-based care and nurse academics. Through interviews and focus groups, leaders explored the role of new graduate RNs in home-based care, discussed preparation of nursing students to work in the home, ability of home-based agencies to provide transitional support to new graduates, differences between work settings, and the structural and cultural history of nursing in home-based care.

Danielle Pierotti, formerly of VNAA/EH, authored an editorial, [The Nurse Workforce Challenge in Home Health](#) focusing on the RN workforce and the growing vacancy rates and recruitment challenges home-based care faces today. Orientation of home care nursing staff was identified as a critical strategy for effective recruitment and retention of both experienced and new graduate RNs.

To provide direct tools and best practice recommendations to members, VNAA/EH wrote two new chapters in its widely-recognized resource, [Blueprint for Excellence](#). These chapters, *"Safety of Home Health and Hospice Team Members in the Home,"* and *"Tools for RN Orientation"* offer peer-generated, evidence-based strategies to address critical recruitment and retention challenges in home-based care organizations. The two chapters will be released in late November.

Building Networks to Strengthen the Home Care and Hospice

In keeping with its commitment to strengthen home-based care through sharing of best practices, VNAA/EH engaged with a wide variety of committees, coalitions, and networks in 2019. This not only increases the visibility of home as a setting for care but helps our home health and hospice members continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of care. For example, VNAA/EH staff participated in interviews with the General Accountability Office on drug disposal and the Federal Trade Commission about mergers in home health and workforce needs.

In addition to collaborating with advocacy coalitions, VNAA/EH engaged with a variety of external stakeholder organizations to improve quality, safety, and patient-centered care. These include:

- 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/EH also launched a collaboration with the Center for Patient Safety and the Joint Commission on falls prevention in home health. The collaborative is the first of its kind for home-based care agencies, and will provide the opportunity to collaborate, investigate and produce evidence to reduce falls in homes. Participating organizations will receive advanced training on how to operationalize systematic quality improvement to reduce falls. The results will be published and reviewed by the Joint Commission.

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

VNAA launched the 21st edition of the award-winning *VNAA Clinical Procedure Manual (CPM)*, a staple of home-based care agencies committed to ensuring high quality care for each patient at each visit. The CPM is the backbone of many home-based care organizations, helping them to ensure clinical procedures are performed in a consistent, reliable way by each clinician each time.

The 21st edition is published in partnership with the Elsevier Publishing Company. The 21st edition increases the total number of procedures by 4%, with expanded attention to pediatric and respiratory care and symptoms at end of life. Unless denoted as “VNAA Exclusive,” the procedures are available in a variety of digital products available from Elsevier Publishing Company including the Home Health Suite, Hospice and Palliative Skills Collection. VNAA members are eligible for a substantial discount on purchases of both digital products and the hard copy. Hard copies can be purchased directly from VNAA.

Member Value Programs



Say "Boo!" to the Flu

In 2019 VNAA partnered with the Clorox Company to host the 14th Annual *Say "Boo!" to the Flu* program, a nationwide education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of flu prevention for children. Every fall, home-based care provider agencies are given step-by-step instructions on how to host a "Boo!" clinic in their local communities and receive national attention for their efforts. These events provide opportunity for members of the community to get their families vaccinated against the seasonal flu, and to learn simple tricks to prevent the spread of the virus.

In September 2019 VNAA announced sixteen home-based care providers nationwide who will receive support to vaccinate over 30,000 children through this year's affiliated events - a 14% increase in participating agencies over 2018. Agencies participating in the 2019 program include: Bethel VNA (Bethel, CT), Community Nursing Services (West Valley City, UT), Franciscan Immunizations (Indianapolis, IN), Franciscan VNS Home Care (Beech Grove, IN), Hamilton County Public Health Nursing Services (Indian Lake, NY), Mercy Home Care (Merced, CA), Northern Light Home Care and Hospice (South Portland, ME) Ridgefield VNA (Ridgefield, CT), Spectrum Health VNA (Grand Rapids, MI), VNA Care Network (Worcester, MA), VNA Community Services (Monterey, CA), VNA of Florida (Stuart, FL), VNA of Johnson County (Iowa City, IA), VNA of Kansas City (Kansas City, MO), VNA of Greater St. Louis (Maryland Heights, MO), and VNA of the Midlands (Omaha, NE).

More than 200,000 vaccines have been administered to children through the *Say "Boo!" to the Flu* program since its inception in 2005.

Educating the Home-based Care Community

Our commitment to the VNAA legacy of community education continued in 2019. VNAA offers training sessions for purchase and in 2019 greatly expanded the number of free webinars dedicated to improving the practice of care in the home. Including our PDGM and PPLS series, we hosted more than 70 webinars in 2019. The average registration is 340 participants per session, with participants offering an average overall quality score of 4.4 out of 5.

- VNAA webinars addressed innovation in practice, case studies in care, research on home health and hospice, public policy analysis, and a variety of news-based topics. Examples include:
- A Quality Job: Clinical Management & Care
- Home Care Becomes Conversation Ready: Using Tools from The Conversation Project to Increase Advance Care Planning Conversations
- Establishing a PDGM Playbook

- Identifying Problems Related to Medication Adherence in Patients Receiving Home Healthcare
- FY 2020 Hospice Final Rule – An Overview
- CMS EMDI Overview 2019
- Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) Value Based Models-Opportunities for Improved Care Navigation through HHAs

Many VNAA webinars are sponsored by our Corporate Partners, an important opportunity for partners to showcase evidence-based practices in home health and hospice

Member-Discounted Flu Vaccines

Through our ongoing partnerships with GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca, VNAA/EH members are eligible to order discounted flu vaccines directly from GSK and Flu Mist from AstraZeneca. Since 2013, GSK has offered the broad protection of an easy-to-use quadrivalent (four-strain) flu vaccine to the US market. Members may purchase GSK flu vaccines by placing a pre-book reservation with GSK. Members earn additional discounts through early pre-booking and by making timely payments and can return unused doses for full credit.

Looking Forward

2020 will likely bring important changes to home health and hospice organizations and to VNAA/EH. Home health and hospice organizations will adapt to the PDGM, continue to raise the bar on quality and meet the expectations from payers to continue adding value. VNAA/EH will move forward in creating a stronger partnership with LeadingAge to continuously improve the value we offer to members as they address a myriad of challenges. We appreciate your commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care in the home. We look forward to supporting your outstanding work through meaningful, valuable member benefits.

2019 Corporate Partners

Platinum Partners



Gold Partners



Silver Partners

