



Visiting Nurse Home Care & Hospice

of Carroll County and Western Maine

2025 REPORT TO
THE COMMUNITY

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The end of the year is often a time of reflection and change. That has never felt more true than it does for me this year at VNHCH. After 17 years serving this incredible organization, I am preparing to retire and look forward to spending more time with family, friends, my beloved pets (four cats and a rescue dog!), and—when the weather allows—hiking, enjoying the outdoors and puttering in my garden.



While saying goodbye to so many wonderful friends, co-workers, and community partners is bittersweet, it is also a moment filled with gratitude and optimism. The time has come to hand off the leadership of VNHCH to the next generation, and I could not be more confident in the future.

It is my pleasure to welcome Jessalynn Geerdes (*shown above*) as our new Executive Director, effective December 1. She brings deep experience in home care leadership

and a clear commitment to our mission of compassionate, community-based care.

Thank you for your friendship and support over the years.

Warm regards,

Sandy Ruka, RN, MSN
Executive Director

WE APPRECIATE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS.

Make Your Gift Online at www.VNHCH.org/donate or Return the Enclosed Courtesy Envelope with Your Donation.

CAREGIVER EXPO WRAP UP

Recently, VNHCH hosted its annual Caregiver Expo at the Mount Washington Valley Adult Day Center in Center Conway. The free, day-long event brought together family caregivers, professionals and community members for education, inspiration and shared support.



Attorney Ed Adamsky, Elder Law Specialist

This year's Expo focused on the growing challenges faced by the "sandwich generation"—adults caring simultaneously for aging parents and children—while also addressing traditional caregiving roles.

Keynote speaker Attorney Ed Adamsky, an elder law specialist, provided practical guidance on estate planning, Medicaid eligibility, and long-term care strategies. Additional sessions included Alana Illsley's heartfelt presentation on multigenerational caregiving, a lively panel discussion with caregivers, and Kelly Brask's virtual program on Swedish Death Cleaning—offering a mindful approach to decluttering and legacy planning. Julie Lanoie and Mary Edes closed the day with a discussion on navigating family dynamics during times of change.

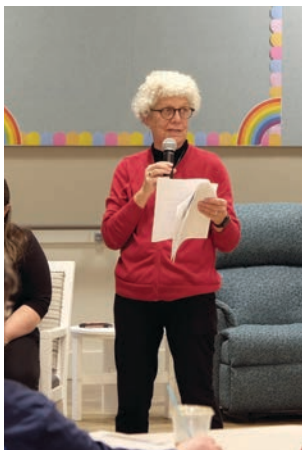


Cynthia Hembree, RN

The event was made possible through the generous support of Merrill Lynch, Memorial Hospital, Valley Originals, Eastern Slope Inn, White Mountain Hotel and the Mount Washington Valley Adult Day Center. Complimentary lunch was sponsored by Valley Originals.



Mary Edes leads a group activity



Sandy Ruka, RN, MSN



Alana Illsley



Jen Kovach, Matt Kovach and Erin Bott, attendees.

Thank you to our sponsors!
We welcome more businesses to support us for the 2026 Expo!



2025 KATHLEEN SHEEHAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO ABIGAIL MULLEN

Abigail Mullen of North Conway, NH, was named the 2025 recipient of the Kathleen Sheehan Memorial Scholarship. The annual \$2,000 award supports local students pursuing degrees in nursing, physical therapy, or occupational therapy.



Abigail Mullen, awarded the 2025 Kathleen Sheehan Memorial Scholarship

Abigail is a nursing student at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts, where she will begin her sophomore year this fall. A Dean’s List student and member of Alpha Lambda Delta, she is recognized for both academic excellence and community service.

A 2023 graduate of Kennebunk High School, Abigail also completed a dual-enrollment program through Southern Maine Community College and has volunteered with the Louis T. Graves Memorial Public Library, the Education Foundation of the Kennebunks and Arundel, and as a teacher’s aide at her high school.

After her sophomore year, Abigail plans to earn her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential and work locally to gain hands-on experience. Following graduation, she hopes to remain in the Conway area and pursue certification as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).

The scholarship honors Kathleen Sheehan, a beloved VNHCH nurse and the agency’s first hospice administrator, whose legacy of compassion continues to inspire the next generation of caregivers.

GIVING HIGHLIGHT - PALLIATIVE CARE

Expanding Compassionate Care: Our Palliative Care Program

As our community ages, the need for palliative care—specialized medical care focused on comfort, dignity, and quality of life—has never been greater. Nearly 30% of residents in Carroll County and Western Maine will be over 65 by 2030, many living with chronic or serious illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer’s, or Parkinson’s.

In response, we’ve developed a Community-Based Palliative Care Program to support individuals and families facing the challenges of serious illness. The program provides relief from pain, stress, and other symptoms, while helping patients and loved ones navigate complex medical, emotional, and spiritual needs.



Sandy Ruka, RN, MSN and Lori Lenart, RN, MSN, FNP

Because palliative care is not reimbursable through Medicare, Medicaid, or most private insurance, this vital service depends entirely on the generosity of grants and community donations. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many donors, families, and partners whose contributions make this care possible. Your support allows us to continue meeting a growing need in our region—ensuring that every patient receives not only expert medical care, but also the compassion, comfort, and dignity they deserve.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Thanks to your generosity, our Palliative Care Program continues to reach neighbors in need—providing comfort, guidance, and dignity to patients living with serious illness.

Your donations help fund:

- Home visits by our Advanced Care Nurse Practitioner
- Symptom management and pain relief for patients with chronic conditions
- Support and education for family caregivers
- Emotional and spiritual care for patients and loved ones

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 Barbara Plonski



From left to right, board members Myles Crowe, James Love, Evan Fritz, Barbara Plonski, Caleb Gilbert, Nancy Lohmiller, Dawn Morrison, Jennifer Clark and Patricia Mason. (not pictured Gail Paine, Andrea Masters)

CELEBRATING OUR DEDICATED STAFF

We celebrate our employees for their service to the agency! Below are those marking milestones this year. Please join us in congratulating them!

2025 Anniversaries

Karen Dodier, LNA	_____ 5 years
Debra Haynes, RN	_____ 5 years
Lisa Whitney, RN	_____ 10 years
Rosalie Miles, HR	_____ 25 years
Angela Nelson, PTA	_____ 10 years
Penny Thomas, LNA	_____ 10 years
Anita Nitz, Coder	_____ 30 years
Margaret Robertson, RN	_____ 30 years
Gale Boucher, Billing	_____ 40 years



Anita Nitz - 30 years



Lisa Whitney, RN - 10 years



Margaret Robertson, RN - 30 years

ASHLEE CHAINE RECOGNIZED FOR 2025 HOME CARE & HOSPICE SERVICE AWARD

The Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care Alliance of New Hampshire recently recognized Ashlee Chaine with the 2025 Home Care and Hospice Service Award. Chaine is the Community Outreach Coordinator for VNHCH.

This award showcases and celebrates true excellence and dedication to providing quality in-home health care beyond just their personal agency. Recipients of the Service Award have been identified as individuals or groups who have made exceptional contributions to the home care and hospice community in New Hampshire and the Alliance. Nominees demonstrate a passion for excellence in home-based care, a dedication to quality improvement, and collegial sharing of their expertise with Alliance members.

Congratulations to Ashlee!



From left to right Amy Moore, Board President of the Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care Alliance of New Hampshire; Sandy Ruka, Ashlee Chaine, and Keliane Totten, Chief Executive Officer of the Alliance.

TEAM RECOGNITION EVENT AT PURITY SPRING RESORT

VNHCH treated their dedicated team to a day of fun and relaxation at Purity Spring Resort this summer, with paddlesports and a barbeque lunch enjoyed by all. Special thanks to the Purity Spring team for making the day extra special.



From left to right: even our butterfly mascot made it to the party; Staff enjoys a picnic on the shores of Purity Lake; kayaking, a great team building activity!

WELCOME KIM DESANCTIS, FNP, HOSPICE ADMINISTRATOR



VNHCH Hospice Administrator
Kim DeSanctis, FNP

We were pleased to announce the appointment of Kim DeSanctis, MSN, FNP, as our new Hospice Administrator this year. With more than two decades of experience in nursing, case management and primary care, she brings both clinical expertise and deep compassion to her leadership of our growing hospice program.

Kim began her healthcare career at just 17 years old. Over the years, she has worked in diverse settings, including medical-surgical nursing, case management, home health, and as a Family Nurse Practitioner in Primary Care. She credits her time in hospital case management—where she supported patients transitioning safely from hospital to home—as one of the most formative experiences preparing her for hospice leadership.

We welcome Kim to the agency and are confident she will help with the continued growth of this vital program.

FINANCIAL REPORT - Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Where the Money Comes From:

Medicare	\$2,764,052
Medicaid	\$199,188
Private	\$941,822
Total Patient Revenue	\$3,905,062
Grants	\$125,255
Other	\$83,643
Total Operating Revenue	\$4,113,960

Where the Money Goes:

Program Expenses	\$3,506,238
Administrative and General	\$803,182
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,309,420
Gain from Operations	(\$195,460)
Contributions	\$70,386
Investment	\$215,971
Change in Fair Value	\$389,053
Total Non-Operating Revenues	\$675,410
Excess Revenue over Expense	\$479,950

VNHCH BY THE NUMBERS

FISCAL YEAR 2025

- Home Care Visits - 15,319
- Home Care Patients - 856
- Hospice Visits - 3711
- Hospice Patients - 119
- Miles Driven - 220,456

GRATEFUL

2025 DONOR HONOR ROLL

Donations to VNHCH during our
2025 fiscal year - 7/1/24-6/30/25

We are deeply grateful to the generous donors and supporters in our community who enable us to carry out our mission. Your contributions make a meaningful difference, and we couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

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www.VNHCH.org

*Look Inside - Meet Our New
Executive Director!*



MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JESSALYNN GEERDES

**We are pleased to announce the appointment of
Jessalynn Geerdes as our new Executive Director.**

Geerdes brings more than a decade of experience in community-based healthcare operations and leadership, most recently serving as Manager of Scheduling Operations for the Granite Visiting Nurses Association, where she oversaw staffing and workflow strategies for home care and hospice services across multiple communities. Her work has focused on improving operational efficiency, building cross-functional teams, and implementing new electronic medical record (EMR) systems to enhance care delivery.

Please join us in welcoming Jessalynn to our team!