Just what is Home Care? Is it really skilled? Isn’t it just being sure the patient is stable when they go home? What do you actually do? Is the staff qualified? What about therapy? Wounds? How long is the care provided? These are just some of the questions that those of us in home care hear quite often. No matter how much we think we are providing information as with any specialty, unless you are in it, you may not completely understand what it is or the relevance for the patient. So as the season is changing, here is a little primer of Home Care 101. As a member of the Aria Health community, we want each of you to be provided with a better understanding of just what we strive to do for you and the patients you entrust to our care. I promise it won’t be painful – here goes!

“Holistic Care” – Those of us in all areas of the health professions have heard this phrase throughout our careers. Simply put, it is to view the patient as a whole person with the interrelated components of “mind-body-spirit,” each needing to be addressed to achieve positive patient outcomes.

Rarely is this focus more important than with skilled home health services. Patients that are discharged from the hospital leave a controlled environment of 24-hour skilled care and monitoring of actual and potential health issues for return to the uncontrolled surroundings of home living conditions! Thus, visiting patients in their homes provides a unique health care perspective for how they and their caregivers continue to be affected by stress and illness. It also presents us with a variety of challenges that need to be addressed to assist the patient to return to wellness and independence with their health care needs.

The “mind-body-spirit” assessment of needs begins with our Home Care Department supervisors and intake staff, continues through skilled home assessment by an RN or Physical Therapist. After in-home skilled assessment, follow-up care and treatment is provided by nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, medical social workers and home health aides. (A nurse is assigned to each patient as the case manager and he/she coordinates the services provided. When a nurse is not needed per diagnoses presenting then a physical therapist takes on that role.)

Can anyone qualify for service? As a licensed Home Health Agency with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we must adhere to the criteria that skilled services are needed and that they are intermittent with an end point in sight. (Exception to this is catheter patients that do not have to be discharged. They will be seen once a month for catheter changes and PRN).

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Professional Home Health Services, The Home Care Department of Aria Health
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How long does the care last? It can be anywhere from 4 visits to months of service depending on the ongoing skilled intervention required. We of course must justify length of stay in the Home Care environment call "A Hospital without Walls"!

With shorter hospital stays, Home Care should be viewed not as an adjunct to the acute care during hospital stay, but rather as part of a continuum in meeting Aria’s objectives to have the patient return to a level of health that existed before a need for recent hospitalization.

How then is Professional Home Health Services, The Home Care Department of Aria Health equipped to meet the complex needs of these patients? We have three teams of nurses, therapists, social workers and aides covering geographic areas in Lower Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. Nurses in our department hold certifications in Wound/Ostomy/Continence, Diabetes Education, Home Health, Cardiac/Vascular Nursing, Medical-Surgical Nursing, Emergency Care, Gerontology and Adult Critical Care. Those not holding specific certifications have extensive experience in ICU, ER, Telemetry, Med-Surg and Home Health. Our physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology and social service staff have many years experience and impressive credentials in their given areas of expertise. We also are fortunate to have caring, qualified home health aides that provide a nurturing, individualized approach to meeting patient’s needs.

Our specialty programs within the department assist us to maintain a proactive approach to high volume diagnoses. We maintain programs for wounds/ostomies, CHF, anti-coagulation therapy, safety and falls prevention, medication management and diabetes education.

Our two Certified Wound/Ostomy/Continence nurses head our Wound/Ostomy program, function as Infection Control Nurses in our department and are largely responsible for our wound healing being at 91% as validated with public information from CMS. The national average is 79% and our 91% is higher than our neighboring agencies. We are very proud of that statistic!

Patient Satisfaction is tracked by Press Ganey and is currently at 93.6%. Surveys go out to 200 patients a month who were discharged from the prior month. Since average amount of discharges from service are 212 a month, this is practically one hundred percent of patients and thus a reliable statistic. As you have probably surmised from this 101 primer, I am very proud of our accomplishments. It is definitely a team effort among administrative, clinical and clerical staff to meet the every day challenges presented.

In closing, I would like to add that a relationship definitely exists between interventions provided and outcomes achieved. It is this relationship that prompts us to proactively seek interventions that link best practice to positive patient outcomes. This goal is further achieved by a collaborative approach within the Home Care Department and through integration with Aria Health committee involvement.

Recognizing the difference between best practices and usual case is the basis for evaluating our current approach to provision of care. This then becomes the “yardstick” by which we evaluate clinical interventions to improve quality of service for our patients, their physicians and the community.

We are located in The Pavilion at 9501 Roosevelt Boulevard, Suite 300. Please stop in, we welcome you. Incidentally, we will be happy to come to your specific area and provide an in-service. Full service brochures are also available for you. Just call 215-676-7393 and we will do our best to meet with you and your group or provide you with our marketing materials.
Bucks County Campus Introduces New Education, Service Excellence Initiatives for Total Joint Replacement Patients

Contributed by: Kimberly Burgess, RNC, MSN, Total Joint Coordinator

Aria’s Bucks County Campus recently introduced enhancements to its full-service Total Joint Replacement Program. In an effort to optimize patient satisfaction, the recently formed Orthopedic Initiative Group has developed a program that begins in the physician’s office with the distribution of custom-tailored manuals for Total Knee Replacement (Kneed to Know) and for Total Hip Replacement (What’s Hip to Know). These manuals provide comprehensive education guiding the patients through their Total Joint experience. The patients also participate in a four-hour pre-admission session to include their diagnostics, history and physical (H&P), financial counseling, and an educational session led by an Orthopedic Clinical Nurse Specialist.

On the day of the patient’s Total Joint Replacement, he or she arrives at the Bucks Campus and is met by Valet Parking Services, as well as the Surgical Service Ambassador. The Surgical Service Ambassador greets patients and their families as they enter the facility and maintains communication between the procedural areas and family members. The Ambassador is proactive in delivering total customer service, working to develop favorable relationships with customers through prompt, accurate, and courteous resolution of all inquiries.

The Total Joint Replacement Program is managed by the Total Joint Coordinators. This role is a collaborative effort of responsibilities shared between the Joint Replacement Educator, Kimberly Burgess, RNC, MSN, and the Orthopedic Case Manager, Linda Hagan, RN. Kim and Linda are the liaisons for physicians, surgical schedulers, and staff, teach the Total Joint Class, and troubleshoot any unforeseen complications that may arise for patients, their families, or staff. The Total Joint Coordinators also maintain Performance Improvement (PI) measures through follow-up phone calls and discharge letters. Total Joint patients are admitted to the Bucks County Campus Orthopedic Unit, 2 West, where they are cared for by orthopedic trained RNs and certified nursing assistants. All total joint replacement patients participate in physical therapy twice a day and daily occupational therapy. When patients qualify for acute rehabilitation, they are often admitted to the Moss Unit at the Bucks County Campus.

For more information about the Total Joint Replacement Program at Aria’s Bucks County Campus, please call the Total Joint Coordinators at 267-587-0888.

Patient Satisfaction – Everyone’s Priority

At Aria Health, regardless of our individual job descriptions and roles in the organization, achieving the highest level of patient satisfaction possible should be a daily priority for each of us. All employees, clinical and non-clinical, play pivotal roles in not only ensuring that all of our patients feel that they receive the best clinical care, but that they are also treated with dignity and compassion. Our patients are often scared and vulnerable. Let’s remember to treat them just as we would want ourselves or our loved ones treated if in the same situation. It may mean just a smile, or assisting a patient lost in the hall, or ultimately navigating the path of clinical care, but all of our collective efforts will help Aria Health be a leader in patient satisfaction.

Hardwiring #6 Reminder – A reminder that the deadline for Managers to complete Hardwiring #6 training with your staff is November 27. All completed sign-in sheets should be forwarded to Lisa Dunn in the Human Resources Department.

Aria Volunteers Celebrated, Rewarded

In true Aria tradition, our dedicated Volunteer Team was honored during national Volunteer Week with a special luncheon at Celebrations. The event was led by Michael Pepe, PhD, Chief Human Resources Officer (left), and Patti Lyall, Director of Volunteer Services (right). May Raburn (center), President of the Aria Health Auxiliary and volunteer, received a special recognition pin for completing 8000 hours, the most of any of Aria’s volunteers.

Aria Holds 30th Annual Run for Wellness

On Sunday, September 20, Aria Health held the 30th Annual Run for Wellness at the Northeast Industrial Park. More than 150 adults and children participated in the event, which featured “family fun” activities, including games, prizes and refreshments. Proceeds raised through the Run for Wellness benefitted Aria’s Health and Wellness community programs, lectures and health fair events. Thank you to everyone who supported the event!
Professional Court Sleep Diagnostics Center Receives American Academy of Sleep Medicine Accreditation

Photo (left to right): Susan Abraham, Vice President; Debbie Trauffer, R&R Committee; Cheryl Grundy, Department Secretary; Tom Bowler, Sleep Technologist; Lauren Terzyk, Sleep Technologist; Jennifer Ruffenach; Sleep Technologist, Carolyn McCain, Manager, Sleep & Neuro; Marc Schlessinger, Director, Cardiorespiratory Services.

The Sleep Diagnostics Center at The Professional Court Outpatient Center (Bustleton & Verree) recently received a full, five-year accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, without any recommendations or deficiencies. Congratulations to the staff at the Sleep Center and their manager, Carolyn McCain for realizing this exciting accomplishment. The “Sleep Center” accreditation by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine is the highest accreditation and signifies the total care of the Sleep patient rather than just a “Sleep Lab,” which only performs patient testing. To pass without any recommendations or deficiencies is unusual and commendable.

Representatives of the Rewards & Recognition Team of Aria Health recognized and celebrated the Sleep Center staff for this important milestone. Representatives of the Rewards and Recognition congratulated the team with a surprise “Party on the Spot.”

Susan Abraham, Vice President, presented a “Certificate of Excellence” to the Sleep Center staff in recognition of their efforts and congratulated them for their sustained conscientious efforts. A cake was provided to enhance the festivities.

Keep your eyes open for other upcoming celebrations by your Rewards and Recognition Team. You never know when and where they might show up!

Cancer Center’s “Save-A-Life” Dragon Boat Team Raises Funds in Memory of Beverly DiLacqua, RN

Aria’s Cancer Center “Save-A-Life” Dragon Boat team presented the Aria Health School of Nursing with a check in the amount of $1,100 in loving memory of Beverly DiLacqua, RN, a former employee of Aria Health.

Bev, a graduate of the Aria Health School of Nursing, lost her battle with cancer in March of 2009. She fulfilled many roles throughout her career at Aria’s Frankford and Torredale Campuses, the most recent one as a care manager nurse at the Torresdale Campus. Bev is remembered by her co-workers as a dedicated nurse, especially when caring for her beloved “heart patients,” assisting them and their family members as they prepared for and recovered from heart surgery.

The contribution to the Aria School of Nursing acknowledges Beverly’s dedication as a compassionate caregiver by utilizing the funds for a well-deserved student or for equipment for the school. In this manner, her memory will live on in the profession to which she was so dedicated.

The “Save-A-Life” team also donated funds raised through the Dragon Boat Race to the Cancer Center’s Halloween Social held annually at the Torresdale Campus.

Mammography Technicians Go “Above and Beyond” in Patient Care

Aria Health would like to recognize mammography technicians Ritzie Gormley (left) and Sue Boyle (right), for going “above and beyond” in patient care. After recently performing a routine mammography screening on a patient at the Torresdale Campus, Ritzie and Sue noticed she had a bruised right arm that she could not move. The patient said she had sustained the injury at home at an earlier time. Ritzie and Sue proceeded to triage the patient to the Torresdale Campus Emergency Department where a fracture was diagnosed on her right arm. Kudos to Ritzie and Sue! We congratulate these technicians for going the extra mile in their approach to patient care and satisfaction.
Aria Health’s Cancer Center Receives Donation from Local Breast Cancer Awareness Walk Held in Memory of Beloved Patient and Friend

For nearly five years, Kate Palchick was a patient at Aria Health’s Cancer Center as she courageously battled breast cancer. During the course of her treatment, Kate shared her positive spirit, contagious sense of humor, and memorable smile, with everyone she met. Physicians...nurses...support staff...the drivers who took Kate to the hospital for her daily radiation therapy...all were touched by her strength and positive outlook.

Kate, along with her sister, Barb, and friends, including Kass Milligan, Executive Secretary, Materials Management, was an active member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) Division #39, an organization based in Mayfair that raises funds and develops programs to support local causes and charities. After her diagnosis, Kate, along with fellow LAOH members, founded the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, which was first held in May 2006 and raised $10,000 in support of local breast cancer research centers and programs. Sadly, Kate lost her fight with breast cancer in September 2006. Her spirit lives on, however; through the memories of those who loved her and the efforts of the LAOH. On May 9, 2009 the LAOH held its 4th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, now known as “Kate’s Way.” Kate’s spirit guided the day and the event was successful in raising more than $16,000. The LAOH has generously donated $3250 to Aria Health’s Cancer Center to support the Center’s annual Breast Cancer Survivors’ Luncheon head each October. Special thanks to the LAOH for continuing Kate’s efforts. All who knew her will never forget her courage, generous spirit and kind heart.

Local Sportscaster Don Tollefson Motivates Guests at Aria’s National Cancer Survivors Day Celebration

Local sportscaster and television personality Don Tollefson gave a motivating presentation regarding the strength of spirit and importance of focused determination in our lives to more than 100 cancer survivors at Aria Health’s National Cancer Survivors Day celebration held in June at the Torresdale-Frankford Country Club. The event “celebrated life” with 1950s-inspired menu and music. In its 22nd year, National Cancer Survivors Day is an annual, worldwide Celebration of Life held in hundreds of communities throughout the United States, Canada, and other participating countries to recognize the lives of people living with a history of cancer, and focus attention on the issues of cancer survivorship.

Aria Health’s Cancer Center Holds Annual “Steppin’ Out” Halloween Bash

Members of Aria Health’s Radiation Oncology Department, including (from left to right) Maryanne Kahmar, Dr. Eric Gressen, Janice Ross, Joanne Gregory, and Patricia McDonough, donned Halloween costumes and celebrated the holiday with patients, family and friends at Aria’s annual “Steppin’ Out” bash on October 23. The party featured Halloween-inspired décor, food and music for the patients to enjoy. The DJ had everyone up on their feet. As always, it was a memorable event for all!
Jennifer Chalfin Simmons, MD, FACS

Board-certified in general surgery, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and fellowship-trained in Diseases of the Breast, Dr. Jennifer Simmons’ practice is exclusive to treating a full range of breast disease at Aria Health. She is experienced and well-regarded by patients and fellow physicians for her approach to both disease treatment and cosmetic preservation of the breast.

Dr. Simmons’ areas of expertise include:
- Management of both benign and malignant diseases of the breast
- Minimally invasive biopsies
- Breast conservation treatment
- Skin-sparing mastectomies
- Immediate reconstructions
- Sentinel lymph node procedures

In addition, Dr. Simmons is a key member of both Aria’s Fast-Track Breast Health Program and multidisciplinary Breast Center Clinic. The Fast-Track Program, one of the first of its kind in the region, provides patients who have a suspicious mammogram with a full diagnostic work-up, and when indicated, an appointment for a surgical consultation, all in one visit. If patients are diagnosed with breast cancer, in a subsequent, one-day visit, they meet with the multidisciplinary Breast Center Clinic team to learn about the most appropriate treatment options and make an informed decision about their care plan.

Dr. Simmons’ clinical training includes a residency in general surgery at Albany Medical Center in Albany, New York, and a fellowship in breast surgery and oncology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. She earned her undergraduate degree from Temple University, a post-baccalaureate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a medical degree from the Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.

Dr. Simmons is a member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association. She also sits on the Board of Living Beyond Breast Cancer and is actively involved in community programs that involve both screening and education. In addition, Dr. Simmons co-authored and served as the chief medical editor for The Guide to the Newly Diagnosed, a Living Beyond Breast Cancer publication distributed nationally and internationally to women with breast cancer.

Looking for a Doctor?

Need a referral or an appointment with a specialist?
Call 1-877-808-ARIA (2742)

In August, Aria Health launched the Health Source Call Center, a new, free physician appointment, referral and information system. Since that time, our Call Center representatives have facilitated physician referrals and appointments for hundreds of patients. We can match you with the right primary care doctor or a specialist. With just one call to 1-877-808-ARIA (2742), our representatives will:
- Provide information to you about a physician
- Answer questions about services, office hours and what insurance a physician accepts
- Make an appointment for you or provide a physician referral

Call us today. Our Call Center representatives look forward to serving you!
Recent Staff Appointments for Patient Access and Patient Financial Services

Janice Cirone
Patient Access Manager

Janice joined the Patient Access team in Spring 2009. Her management responsibilities include overseeing the Patient Access staff at the Bucks County Campus, Torresdale Campus Outpatient Center, The Professional Court (Bustleton & Verree) and The Pavilion (9501).

Andrea DiMemmo
Patient Accounts Manager

Andrea joined the Patient Financial Services team in September 2009 as Patient Accounts Manager. A welcome addition to 5009, Andrea comes to Aria with several years experience.

Catherine McHenry
Patient Access Supervisor

Catherine has been with Aria since 2001 in the Patient Financial Services Department as a Team Leader. In September 2009, she became Patient Access Supervisor at the Torresdale Campus, managing the outpatient area there as well as at The Professional Court (Bustleton & Verree) and The Pavilion (9501).

Linda Lipschutz
Patient Access Manager, Central Scheduling and Health Source Call Center

Linda joined the Aria Health team in 2005 as a Patient Access Educator. In Spring 2009, she was promoted to Manager. In this role, Linda manages the Central Scheduling staff and Aria’s new Call Center.

Donna Miller, RN, MSN, Named Patient Safety Officer

Donna Miller, RN, MSN, was recently named Patient Safety Officer for Aria Health. A member of the Aria team since 2005, Donna has experience in Clinical Research, Infusion Therapy and, most recently, as a Critical Care Educator and staff RN in the Interventional Radiology Department. Donna is a graduate of the University of Scranton and earned a Masters in Nursing from Holy Family University. Donna can be reached at ext. 2-4822 and her office is located on the 2nd Floor of the Mansion House at the Torresdale Campus. ■

Anthony Abbruzzi, DO, Continues Providing Primary Care to Northeast Philadelphia Patients at Two Convenient Locations

Dr. Anthony Abbruzzi, board-certified internist, is pleased to announce the relocation of his primary care internal medicine practice to The Wakeling Building, at 5000 Frankford Avenue on Aria Health’s Frankford Campus. In addition, Dr. Abbruzzi will see patients at a second Northeast Philadelphia site, conveniently located near the intersection of Grant Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard, at 2469 Grant Avenue. For more information about Dr. Abbruzzi’s practice, clinical services and office hours at both sites, call 215-671-8900. To schedule an appointment, please call 1-877-808-ARIA (2742).

Dr. Anthony Abbruzzi – Two Convenient Locations Serving Northeast Philadelphia:

- The Wakeling Building
  5000 Frankford Avenue
  Philadelphia, PA 19124
- 2469 Grant Avenue
  Philadelphia, PA 19114
Congratulations to CAREPlus Award Winners

May/June 2009

Dawn Smith, RN
Operating Room, Frankford Campus

Dawn consistently focuses on the patient and family assuring that all questions have been answered before the patient goes to surgery and that the family is clear on the course of action. Dawn is an excellent role model for the staff. She is an absolute pleasure to work with and gives 500% every day.

Kathleen E. Eastburn, RN
Radiology, Torresdale Campus

Kathy is a compassionate and caring individual who enjoys caring for patients. She has functioned as a preceptor for new employees and offers guidance whenever needed. She does whatever she can to provide exceptional patient care on a daily basis.

Linda Gathercole, RN
Pre-Admission Testing, Bucks County Campus

Linda takes the lead, is self-directed and always willing to help her colleagues. She works tirelessly to ensure the efficiency of her unit and exhibits a positive, high energy attitude that is infectious.

July/August 2009

Donna Wright, CT
Scan Technician – CAT Scan, Frankford Campus

Donna treats every patient she deals with like they were a family member. She is always willing and ready to help her coworkers. She is a model employee and does everything she can to ensure all patients are treated with her best effort... always.

Kimberly McMonagle
Lead Housekeeper – Housekeeping, Torresdale Campus

Kim has excellent customer services skills always puts patients first. She takes pride in her work and works to ensure those she manages have the same ethics. Kim always has a smile and a “can do” person.

Barbara Zampirri
Medical Technician – Laboratory, Bucks County Campus

Barbara has the highest quality standards and holds staff accountable. She always takes the initiative to research problems and has been proactive with cost-cutting measures by flexing staff and taking on additional work load.

Aria’s Fast-Track Breast Health Program

Launched in January 2009, Aria Health’s Fast-Track Breast Health Program has experienced steady growth and is currently operating at full capacity with between 20 and 25 patients per week. The Fast-Track Program, one of the first of its kind in this region, provides patients with a full diagnostic work-up, and when indicated, an appointment for a surgical consultation, all in a single visit.

A patient is referred to Aria’s Fast-Track Program in one of two ways. If she or her physician feels a breast lump, or if an abnormality is discovered on a screening mammogram, she will be given the next available Fast-Track appointment. Even if the schedule is full, hours are extended so that everyone who needs an appointment is accommodated during the next Fast-Track session. One of the many benefits of the Fast-Track Program is that it streamlines the follow-up testing and coordination of specialist care for the woman with a potential breast cancer. Quick answers and closure in regards to breast health problems can help alleviate the stress and anxiety that generally accompany a delay in diagnosis.

For more information on Aria’s Fast-Track Breast Health Program, please call Rosemarie Rahill, Women’s Health Coordinator and Fast-Track Program Navigator, at 215-612-4808.