



# Covenant Connections

## Covenant Health News and Community Events

### Home Care for the Homeless

Covenant HomeCare and KARM are helping homeless people in Knoxville who need medical care

For some patients, a hospital stay is followed by caregiving visits at home from a home health nurse - but what if the patient doesn't have a home?

Because of infrequent access to medical services, members of the homeless population often need emergency care and hospitalization. During the past two years, Knox Area Rescue Ministries, a faith-based organization in downtown Knoxville that provides services for the homeless, and Covenant HomeCare have implemented a program to provide medical care and resources for homeless people to begin building healthier lifestyles.

During the past two years, Covenant HomeCare and KARM have implemented a transitional care program to provide medical care and the resources needed for homeless patients to begin building healthier lifestyles. Thanks to a \$150,000 start-up grant from Fort Sanders Foundation, the program cares for male patients in an eight-bed unit at the shelter.

"We hope to meet basic needs of the homeless population, which includes medical care," said Burt Rosen, president and CEO of Knox Area Rescue Ministries. "Having food, a room, stability, and the security of compassionate care puts residents on the path toward restoration, which is our ultimate goal."

"In addition to helping the men with their clinical needs, it has been rewarding to see how the transitional care unit has helped them personally," said John Huskey, president of Covenant HomeCare. "By becoming medically stable, they are less likely to be back in the hospital as quickly. The sense of community helps the healing process, and the residents can focus on recovery and taking steps to move forward in other aspects of their lives."

#### A Caring Team

As a clinical supervisor for Covenant HomeCare, Lori Molter, RN, oversees a team of home health nurses and therapists. Her responsibilities also include planning next steps for her homeless patients, and she says her visits to KARM are among the most enjoyable parts of her job. "This partnership and how we reach people has exceeded my expectations," Molter said.

"When I think about ways to best serve the patients, this goes far beyond what I could have dreamed. This is what our Covenant Health pledge to 'put patients first' looks like."



Covenant HomeCare's clinical supervisor Lori Molter, RN, determines patients' next steps of care after leaving the hospital.



Leslie Price, RN at Covenant HomeCare, visits KARM residents twice a week, building trust between patients and provider.



Covenant HomeCare social worker Lisa Bentley, MSW, visits KARM patients weekly and connects them with additional resources for their care.



Ilesha Yarbrough is passionate about her work in the transitional care unit at Knox Area Rescue Ministries.

Covenant HomeCare social worker Lisa Bentley also visits the residents weekly and says she sees changes in patients' demeanor simply because someone is paying attention to them.

A home health nurse often instructs a family member or caregiver how to dress a wound, manage an IV, or assist with other medical care - but in this case, the "family member" is a KARM employee. Ilesha Yarbrough, KARM respite care team member, is on site at the transitional care unit Monday through Friday and has a weekend counterpart.

#### Patients Tell Their Stories

Robert W. was hospitalized because of chronic kidney illness and untreated diabetes. After leaving the hospital, he didn't have anywhere to go. Covenant HomeCare found a place for him at KARM's transitional care unit.

"They've been right here helping me get through it and heal up, getting ready to get up and out of here. If I wasn't in this program I would probably not be healthy," said Robert. "They make sure we take our medicine and do what's good for us to get better."

While staying in the transitional care unit, Robert graduated from LaunchPoint, KARM's 30-day program that helps build a support system and reinforce life lessons such as budgeting and finding housing before transitioning back into the community.

Michael F. is a U.S. Army veteran living with throat/tongue cancer. After receiving care at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center, Michael was transient. With Lori Molter's help, he found respite care at KARM.

Michael says it is comforting to know he has a safe place to rest, not only at night, but during the day when chemotherapy

and radiation have taken a toll. He credits "Nurse Leslie" and Ilesha, who help him get to appointments and lift his spirits.

"I don't know what I'd do if it weren't here," he said about the transitional care unit. "It's not distracting, so you can keep your mind on your appointments, and getting well."

"Before the transitional care unit existed, homeless patients had nowhere to go after the hospital, or they were on the streets," Molter said. "Now we know exactly where to find them and are seeing bonds form, not just between the resident and the nurses or social worker, but among the men, who support each other through their difficulties. It's amazing to see - this program has saved lives."

#### BY THE NUMBERS

Covenant HomeCare's partnership with Knox Area Rescue Ministries has resulted in fewer emergency care visits, lower hospital readmissions, lower risk of subsequent illness or infection, improvement in medication compliance and better patient outcomes for the homeless. Overall, the program has seen:

- Repeat ED visits **reduced by 50%**
- Total hospital inpatient days **reduced by 87%**
- Average hospital inpatient length of stay **reduced by 62%**

### Home(Care) for the Holidays

While many of us associate the holidays with shopping, parties and travel, others will spend the holidays recovering from illness or injury. When care is needed at home, Covenant HomeCare can help.

The area's largest locally owned home health provider, Covenant HomeCare offers transitional or continued care, and serves nearly 5,000 patients annually in 17 counties through branches in Knoxville, Oak Ridge and Morristown. With certified clinicians in specialized areas, Covenant HomeCare helps patients live with comfort, dignity and independence in their homes.

#### Compassionate End-of-Life Care

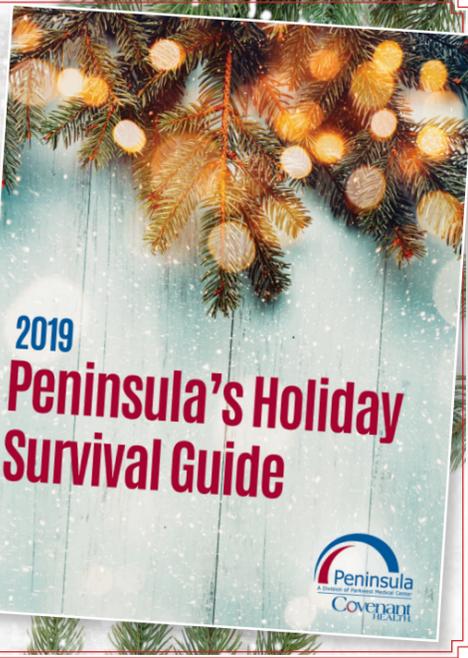
For patients and families facing end-of-life care, Covenant Hospice uses a

team approach to medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support that is tailored to the patient's needs and wishes. Families and loved ones also receive support and assistance. Covenant Hospice offers bereavement care, grief support groups and Katerpillar Kids, a special camp for children and youth grieving the loss of a loved one.

Covenant Hospice is proud to have reached Level IV of We Honor Veterans, a program developed by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs. We Honor Veterans builds awareness and appreciation for the sacrifices our veterans have made, and improves their end-of-life care.

#### Help for the Holidays

In the midst of celebrations and festivities, the holidays can be a stressful time. Whether your concerns are about family gatherings, budget constraints, overindulging in holiday feasts, too much busy-ness, or the "holiday blues," Peninsula's 2019 Holiday Survival Guide can help put some joy back into the season. Download your free copy at PeninsulaBehavioralHealth.org.



#### Make 2020 a Beautiful Year with "The Art of Healing"

Keep up with next year's events and schedules while enjoying the creative work of local and regional artists. Calendars from the Artsclamation! art sale make a great addition to your home or office, or a perfect holiday gift. Proceeds benefit Peninsula Behavioral Services. To order yours for \$10, call 865-531-5210.



### JINGLE RUN FOR HOPE

5K RUN OR WALK

5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL RUN  
SATURDAY, DEC. 7  
Register at  
JingleRunForHope.com



GIVE HOPE TO PATIENTS FIGHTING CANCER

For more information: 865-541-4500 or CovenantHealth.com