

# carenews

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**Good day! As we draw near to the end of Fiscal Year 2017 I want to once again express my sincere appreciation for all of the hard work you are undertaking.**

Collectively, you have come together with the purpose and resolve to meet the challenges head on. With the action plans as our road map, the progress is real. The action and urgency applied to this critical effort is paying off, but it doesn't abruptly end when we turn the calendar to October. I know you are well aware of that and are tuned in to the regular updates and the specifics of the plans that involve you, your department, and your colleagues. The progress we have made over the past 90 days is tremendous. Please keep up the great work!

Today, I would also like to highlight two important initiatives we are investing in because we believe they will have a tremendous impact on the work we do. In fact, they already are! The programs I am referencing are the VNA Residency Program for New Graduate Home Health Nurses and the Medical Coding Apprenticeship Program at Women & Infants.

Both of these programs represent an investment in the talent, energy, enthusiasm and expertise of the individuals involved. These programs offer the opportunity for hands-on learning, mentorship, and the chance to develop skills critical to both health care and professional development. These are great examples of how we can best prepare for our current and future needs while offering great learning and enrichment opportunities for those eager to learn and develop a career in health care. This is a true win-win opportunity!

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## **VNA of Care New England holds inaugural resident graduation**

Congratulations to the graduates of the inaugural class of residents who have completed the VNA of Care New England's Residency Program for New Graduate Home Health Nurses. The graduation ceremony took place Thursday, September 14, at VNA of Care New England's home office.

"This residency program has brought an energy and excitement to our agency," said Kathleen

Peirce, RN, MS, vice president of operations, executive director, and chief nursing officer of the VNA of Care New England, in speaking to the new graduates. "I hope that you continue to seek out the resources and opportunities that are here and ready for you. It is our hope that the continuum of care provided through Care New England will allow you to grow as a health care professional within our system. Congratulations to all!" *continued >*

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

~ Steven Spielberg

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The graduating class includes Christie Bilodeau, Dawn Landry, Lindsey Lilly, Amelia Mason, Karina Salazar-Marte, and Kendra Santilli. During the ceremony Bilodeau, Landry, and Salazar presented their evidence-based practice research, "Assessing Impaired Cognition in Home Care Patients with Heart Failure," and Lilly, Mason, and Santilli presented their research, "Assessing Health Literacy in Home Care Heart Failure Patients."

"It is quite an experience to be a brand new nurse in a patient's home with multiple complex illnesses, sometimes in less than ideal living conditions. Yet these six nurses did so with finesse. They far exceeded our expectations and we are quite proud of them," said Lisa DiMaria, PhD, nurse

residency program manager and program preceptor. "We know that the best nurses are the ones that keep learning, know where to get their information, and can apply the evidence to their own practice. In doing so, they change nursing, add value to our profession, and exemplify the nurses of the future. Congrats to all the graduates of our first residency program at the VNA."

Upon graduating the residency program, which, according to Peirce, was developed to "elevate community home health nursing and assist the VNA in retaining top caliber nursing staff," all six residents have accepted positions with the VNA of Care New England.

## 2017 Graduates

**Christie Bilodeau, RN**, of Woonsocket, graduated with her bachelors of science in nursing from Rhode Island College in 2016. She also earned bachelors degrees in English and psychology from University of Rhode Island in 2012. In reflecting on her experience in the VNA Residency Program, Bilodeau said, "The VNA Residency Program has offered me so much guidance and support as a new nurse. It is thanks to Lisa DiMaria and the rest of the VNA staff that my nursing skills have flourished. Patients face many barriers to health care, and as a home care nurse, I am able to assess what these barriers may be, ensure that a patient is safe, and provide the tools to living a healthy lifestyle. This past year at the VNA has taught me the integral role that home care nursing plays in a patient's life; I couldn't imagine beginning my nursing career any other way." Bilodeau will continue working as a registered nurse on VNA of Care New England's home health team.

**Dawn Landry, RN**, of North Providence, graduated with her bachelors of science in nursing from Rhode Island College in 2016. Landry also holds a master's degree in social work and masters in non-profit management from New York University, as well as a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California, San Diego. For Landry, the VNA residency program allowed her to "work closely with such a great group of nurses, as well as a preceptor who was always helpful and available." Landry aspires to help others as they transition through to the end of their lives and will continue working as a registered nurse on the VNA of Care New England's hospice team.

**Lindsey Lilly, RN**, of Hope Valley, graduated with her associates in nursing from the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) in 2016 with highest honors. While studying at CCRI she was a member of the Nursing Honor Society of Alpha Delta Nu and the National Honor Society of Phi Theta Kappa. She is currently enrolled in an RN to BSN program through Southern New Hampshire University, where she was recently inducted into the National Society of Leadership and Success. She is expected to finish her BSN program in December 2017. In reflecting on the VNA Residency Program, Lilly said, "This VNA Residency Program has taught me so much. I have expanded my clinical skills as well as my communication and teaching skills. Adjusting to the professional nurse role has been challenging, but I am confident to say that I can attribute all of my professional progress to this residency program. I am forever grateful to the VNA for this opportunity and the experience that it has given me." Lilly will continue to work as a registered nurse on the VNA of Care New England's home health team. As Lilly moves forward in her nursing career she hopes to work in a critical care setting to expand her clinical skills in a faster-paced environment, with hopes to transition to a nursing position in a neonatal intensive care unit.

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**Amelia Mason, RN**, of North Providence, graduated with her bachelors of science in nursing from Salve Regina University in 2016. While enrolled in the VNA Residency Program, she was encouraged by the welcoming community of the VNA and the ongoing support of staff, specifically the nurse residency program manager, Lisa DiMaria. For Mason, the residency program was an ideal opportunity to "work with a wide variety of patients within the home setting." Mason will continue working as a registered nurse on the VNA of Care New England's home health team.

**Karina Salazar-Marte, RN**, of Cranston, graduated with her bachelors of science in nursing, with a minor in gerontology and health care administration, from Rhode Island College in 2016. In 2016 she was honored with the Harold D. Sweet Award in Gerontology for her volunteer work with seniors in lower income communities. Salazar-Marte said, "I am thankful to have had the opportunity to acquire experience in an environment that focuses on quality and effectiveness of health for their patients. I was honored to have the opportunity to be trained by an enthusiastic and experienced educator, Lisa DiMaria. It is rewarding to collaborate as partners with patients as they adapt to a new chronic diagnosis or through the healing process after a hospitalization." As Salazar continues to grow in the field of nursing, she hopes to focus on her clinical practice and leadership skills. Salazar-Marte is a registered nurse on the VNA of Care New England's home health team.

**Kendra Santilli, RN**, of East Providence, graduated with her diploma in nursing from St. Joseph School of Nursing in 2016. Santilli also holds an associate's degree in liberal arts. She is currently enrolled in an RN to BSN program through Southern New Hampshire University and is expected to graduate in 2018. When reflecting on the past year of the VNA Nurse Residency Program Santilli said, "I'm thankful for the VNA Residency Program because I was able to get an effective orientation and feel like I have established a great foundation as a nurse." Santilli will continue working as a registered nurse with the VNA of Care New England's home health team.



At the graduation ceremony, the incoming class of 2018 was also introduced including: Monica Huber, Lydia Dorsey, Julie Lee-Alvarez, Brenda Vanner, Jesmel Ocasio, and Melissa Jean.

The VNA of Care New England's Residency Program for New Graduate Home Health Nurses is one year in length, beginning each September, with a dedicated preceptor for every six new graduates hired. The preceptor exposes new graduates to home care through supervised visits initially, and provides ongoing support and mentorship as participants progress through the residency. The typical day of a nurse resident consists of morning report, planned education, patient visits, and visit debriefing.

The combination of practical application, educational opportunities, and peer support is integral in making the transition from new graduate to competent nurse.

*Pictured from left to right: Monica Huber, Lydia Dorsey, Julie Lee-Alvarez, Brenda Vanner, Jesmel Ocasio and Melissa Jean.*



## Women & Infants launches Medical Coding Apprenticeship program

Collaboration and teamwork have resulted in the successful launch of Care New England's first Medical Coding Apprenticeship program at Women & Infants Hospital, and the first medical coding apprenticeship in the state of RI. Care New England's management team and the labor union, SEIU 1199NE, have worked together to develop every aspect of the apprenticeship program, including measurable competencies, related training, and predictable wage increases. They have formed an apprenticeship committee to review program changes, evaluate candidates, and have even funded a contracted position that will help expand this exciting work system-wide.

With six new apprentices on board, the results have been immediate. Donna Sprague, preceptor for the medical coding apprentices, says that she attributes the apprenticeship program's structured, on-the-job-learning and mentorship as the reason for the initial cohort's successful adoption of the program. "The apprentices all know what to expect in order to succeed. They take classes as a cohort, and they help each other earn passing grades that result in certification."

The results are more than anecdotal, Renee Vuz, manager of Health Information Management (HIM), reports that the department saw a lower bill hold last quarter. "These results allow more movement and cross-functional work between coders."

"The goals for this program are large, but very achievable," says Jen Couri, director of HIM, Coding and Revenue Integrity. "We have already seen an increase in our coders' cross-functional capacity. When medical coders can code both outpatient and inpatient records, the hospital experiences increased productivity and billable hours. With a grow-your-own-talent model, we expect to save our department substantial overhead costs."

In September 2015, Care New England, in partnership with Apprenticeship/RI, was the recipient a Department of Labor's American Apprenticeship Initiative grant to expand apprenticeship as a model to industries outside of the trades, including the health care sector. To date, Care New England has registered four apprenticeship programs, including coding, nursing, and licensed alcohol and drug counselor. With multiple occupations in the pipeline, apprenticeship is a model that provides on-the-job learning, along with classroom instruction, to upskill current employees and provide career pathways system-wide. Apprenticeship RI and the Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) have worked closely with all partners to provide support from program design and registration to curriculum implementation, and competency evaluation to mentor/supervising coaching.

*Pictured left to right from Health Information Management are: Christi Beneduce, Deb Smyth, Donna Sprague, Kathy Rickard, Laura Barbosa, Renee Vuz, Deborah Mullen, Leslie Lamarre, Sarah Rousseau-Gagne, Eileen Cordeiro, and Ryan Making.*



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Thank you and have a great week ahead!

Sincerely,

Dennis D. Keefe  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**ConvergenceRI**  
Click [here](#) to view this week's ConvergenceRI





## Thousands “Rally for Recovery” in Providence

Care New England and The Providence Center were key sponsors in this year’s Rally 4 Recovery, Rhode Island’s annual celebration of the recovery community held at the Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence. The Rally took place on September 16, marking National Recovery Month. More than 6,000 people of all ages attended.

Speakers included Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza, US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) Director Rebecca Boss, and Anchor’s Director of Recovery Support Services Debra Dettor. Entertainment included dancing, hip hop, and local rock band The Senders closing out the day. The Rally for recovery has grown each year since its inception in 2003.



## Disaster relief for our friends in Houston

Sodexo, who manages Care New England’s food services, has set up a disaster relief fund to help the almost 5,000 Sodexo employees who live within 150 miles of where Hurricane Harvey made landfall. They are just in the beginnings of rebuilding.

CNE employees may make online donations at:  
<https://www.crowdrise.com/sodexo-employee-disaster-relief-fund-inc>.

Just have pocket change? For one month, in the cafeteria, Sodexo coin jars will collect change to be submitted as a joint donation to this fund. Given damage due to Hurricane Irma, it’s likely a similar relief fund will be set up for our friends there as well; watch for details.

## Are your escreen results concerning you? Now enrolling Healthy Steps participants

Whether you have been struggling with being overweight for many years, have recently gained weight, or have a child who has been struggling with weight problems, we are here to help. Fall into fitness and register for the pre-holiday Healthy Steps Program.

All benefit-eligible employees in the Care New England Health System, their spouses, and their dependents (age 15+) are eligible to participate. A \$50 initial fee is required, which will be refunded in full upon the program’s completion.



The Healthy Steps Program includes:

- Weekly check-in meetings with a registered dietitian or exercise physiologist at the CNE Wellness Center in Warwick.
- A 12-week Healthtrax Fitness Center membership in Warwick or East Providence.
- Five fitness coaching sessions introducing you to the cardiovascular and strength training equipment inside the center.

To learn more or to get started on your journey to a healthier lifestyle call, (401) 737-3066. 

