



VNA Care Network
VNA of Boston
VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

Caring Matters

Spring 2026



**CELEBRATING
YOUR
IMPACT**



**TOGETHER, WE FUEL
LIFE-CHANGING
HEALTH CARE**

Family finds peace and comfort at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home

From the moment Joan Malanson and her family arrived at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home, they felt wrapped in compassion. Every member of the hospice team focused on bringing comfort and peace during their final days together.

Just months earlier, life had felt steady and full. Although Joan had some mobility challenges, she was thriving after moving to an assisted living facility. Always social, she eagerly joined excursions to local restaurants, played Bingo, and took part in the many activities offered. She embraced being part of a community.

Then her health changed suddenly.

During a second hospitalization for cellulitis, doctors diagnosed Joan with multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. The treatments took a toll from which she never recovered.

"The cancer took over. She was so weak. She couldn't walk during the last two months. Everything just became so difficult," said Patricia Malanson, one of Joan's three children.

Joan stopped treatment to focus on comfort. She and her family turned to VNA Care's hospice program for care and support.

The hospice team provides care wherever a person calls home, and includes skilled nurses, physicians and nurse practitioners, social workers, spiritual and bereavement counselors, hospice aides, and trained volunteers.

Together, they focus on expert pain and symptom management while also providing emotional, spiritual, and practical support for patients and loved ones – improving quality of life during the end-of-life journey.

While VNA Care's hospice team worked closely with assisted living staff and Joan's family to keep her safe and comfortable, concerns grew about her ability to remain in her apartment. Joan's hospice nurse introduced the



"The care the Monahan staff provided for my mother and the compassion they showed us was incredible. I want everyone going through what we did to receive that same kind of care."

–Patricia Malanson

Pictured: Joan Malanson

family to VNA Care's Rose Monahan Hospice Home.

The 10-bed residence opened nearly 30 years ago as a homelike place where terminally ill patients receive end-of-life care when remaining at home is no longer possible or optimal. Since then, it has become a beloved and vital community resource for families facing life's most difficult moments.

The family made the decision to move Joan to the Rose Monahan Hospice Home.

"From the moment we brought my mother to the Monahan Home, it was amazing," said Patricia. "The nurses were so compassionate towards her, and made sure she had everything she needed or wanted without even a question. They were also very caring towards us."

Joan's first week at the residence was filled with visits from her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Longtime friends, old neighbors, and former coworkers from her many years working at the Worcester Public Schools's Durkin Administration Building came to say goodbye. Surrounded by love, Joan had the opportunity to share meaningful moments with those closest to her.

After those visits, Patricia could see that her mother was at peace. Joan

became unresponsive the next day.

Throughout this time, the Rose Monahan Hospice Home nurses kept Patricia informed about changes in her mother's condition and remained available to answer any questions and offer reassurance. Patricia took comfort in knowing that everything possible was being done to ensure her mother was comfortable and pain-free.

Joan passed away peacefully at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home on Nov. 27, 2025, at age 86.

The care and compassion shown to Joan and her family made an enormous impact. In gratitude, they made a charitable gift in support of the Rose Monahan Hospice Home and invited others to honor Joan's memory with donations.

Philanthropic support ensures the future of the first and only hospice residence for the terminally ill in Central Massachusetts. Donations sustain exceptional end-of-life care that promotes dignity and quality of life, while also maintaining the homelike atmosphere of the residence and the beauty of its grounds.

"We wanted to give back as much as we could," said Patricia. "The care the Monahan staff provided for my mother and the compassion they showed us was incredible. I want everyone going through what we did to receive that same kind of care."

CELEBRATING YOUR IMPACT

HOME HEALTH CARE

Patients Served
20,825

Total Visits
293,469

Age Range
1 to 108

Visits by Discipline
Skilled Nursing: 40%
Physical Therapy: 42%
Occupational Therapy: 13%
Home Health Aides: 2%
Other: 3%

Specialty Services
IV Therapy
Cardiac Care
Chronic Disease Management
Wound and Ostomy Treatments
Fall Prevention
Medication Management
Total Joint Replacement Program, among others

Leading Medical Conditions
Cardiovascular
Cancer
Post-Surgical
Respiratory...and more than 2,460 unique diagnoses



VNA Care Clinicians and Staff: 746

Clinical and Staff Education
6,005 Sessions

Miles Driven
1,971,490

Languages/Dialects Spoken
37 with additional languages through our translator services



HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Patients Served
2,077

Total Visits
47,132

Rose Monahan Hospice Home
254 Patients, and Support for Families and Loved Ones

Average Patient Days
65

Age Range
19 to 108

Leading Patient Diagnoses
Cancer
Cardiovascular
Respiratory
Dementia

Grief and Bereavement Support
5,849 Sessions

Hospice Volunteers
91

Care Providers
Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, Physicians, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Home Health Aides, Medical Social Workers, and Bereavement and Spiritual Counselors

Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025

Recognizing extraordinary care through Thanks for Caring Society

Patients and their loved ones warmly express their appreciation by recognizing the compassionate, skilled care of their nurses and other clinicians through meaningful donations.

These gifts inspire us and strengthen the unparalleled home health and hospice care our clinicians provide each and every day. The following staff were delighted to be honored in 2025 through the **Thanks for Caring Society**.

Nursing

Augustine Abunaw
Lynne Anderson
Keith Antreassian
Brittany Augusto
Felicia Avery
Anna Azizian
Juliette Belsito
Eunice Berfi
Carrie Bergman
Jill Beverly
Heather Bliss
Nancy Borgatti-Krouse
Elia Borges
Charlotte Boyer
Emeka Chidebe
Siu Chung
Regina Cunningham
Emma Dancy
Kerri Darienzzo
Christine Desorcy
Giselle Desroches
Vickie Falcon
Kimberly Fegan
Leanne Fleming
Jennifer Gagliastro
Dana Gillis
Tracy Gorham
Valerie Green

David Heredia
Caitlin Hoffman
Jennifer Hurley
Nicole Kalinowski
Margo Kiss
Sophia Kontoes
Michelle Krug
Sheila LaPointe
Eva Magabe
Alison Magerowski
Melisa Mantha
Delsye West Mason
Mary McCarthy
Brittany McKay
Allison Mehta
Sharon Moores
Michelle Morfiris
Melanie Moroney
Judy Musyoki
Lisa Nelson
Pamela Nichols
Esther Njoroge
Kerry O'Connor
Tiffany Odell
Mary Ortgiesen
Maryanne Palizzolo
Sarah M. Phillips
Danielle Piehl
Jessica L. Piper

Rose Plaisival
Angela Richardson
Erica Roesch
Miriam Rogers-Montalvo
Maryellen Romeo
Abigail Roundy
Marie Sagaille
Danielle Scotto
Sarah Sullivan
Diane Tilley
Sean D. Tobin
Jillian Vazquez
George Wakanya
Kelly Wallace
Verna Wilson-Lewis
Lily Wood

Rehabilitation Therapy

Shawn Allan
Kris-Ann Amato
Dyna Ashe
Karen Bercume
Mauro Bernardino
Nigel Best
Alexa Blonder
David Bolocboloc
Kenneth Breitenstein
Teresa Burgess
Amy Calhoun

Mary Claire Cantor
Linda Carroll
Wendy Chevarie
Vincent Clark
Emily Coelho
Amy Cooke
Danielle Cotton
Teresa Coulter
Casey Curtis
Alison Dahl
Brandie Davies
Alison Deane
Alexandra DesLauriers
Barbara Devecis
Joanna Donato
Erica Donnelly
Mary Dow
Robert Dulfan
Coni Durkin
Michael Edwards
Kelly Feiz
Keith Fritze
Carolyn Gagnon
Jeremy Gately
Susan Gauthier
Allison Gill
William Giuffre

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“Being honored through a patient or family member’s donation is deeply humbling. It tells me that the care we provide truly makes a difference.

When we see patients in their homes, we’re able to build meaningful relationships and support them in a way that promotes not just their health, but also their overall well-being. Seeing that impact firsthand is why I love what I do.”

–Abigail Roundy, RN Case Manager

\$2,258,409 in Charity Care: Our care in action

At VNA Care, it is our belief that every person deserves the highest quality of care when recovering from injury or illness or facing a life-limiting disease. We are deeply committed to ensuring all our neighbors, including the most vulnerable, receive the full scope of care when needed most.

As part of this mission, in 2025 VNA Care's nurses, social workers, and other clinicians provided more than 7,000 charitable care patient visits to support our vibrant community, alongside a wide range of programs and services.

Thanks for Caring Society...continued from page 4

Natalie Green
Erwin Guevarra
Brian Hailey
Denise Hall
Kimberly Hartwell
Jamie Hebert
Christian Henderson
Audrey F. Higgins
Michael Hoadley
Amelia Jackson
Rebecca Johnson
Thomas Johnson
Olga Karaban
Harriet Katz
Matthew King
Sharon Kuebler
Kathrynn Lavallee
Eric Leedberg
Jessica Leger

Kelly Maguire
Philip Marchese
Patrick McCallum
David McIntire
Kimberly McLeod
Nicole Merrifield
Leah Micu
Amy Millette
Melissa Molinari
Kyrenya Nava-McNamara
Stephen Pallazola
Anastasia Panagopoulos
Rhonda Peabody
Michael Perkins
Robert Pillis, Jr.
Sheila Priestly
LeeAnn Reger
Nancy Ryan
Judith Sama

Jennifer Schmuck
Kathy Sciaratta
Emily Seaver
Andrea Segel
Susan Spencer
Jennifer Stanwick
Lisa Sternstrom
Kerri Stevens
Steven Thibodeau
Diana Thompson
Joseph Twiraga
Jennifer Vocino
Jason Waitkevich
Jason Walsh
Tina Weidner
Jessica Whalen
Lauren Wheeler
Amy Williams

Hospice Spiritual Counselors

Ted MacNeil
Andrew Tripp

Medical Social Work

Kelly Manning
Rachel Murphy
Sarah Phillips

Home Health & Hospice Aides

Sheyla Acevedo
Regina Birden
Nicole Dell
Marion Kettell
Sandra Melton
Jennifer Mullins

After life-threatening health crisis, VNA Care clinicians help retiree regain health and maintain independence in his own home ...continued from back cover

Chris slowly made progress in regaining his health, and was able to continue recovering at home with VNA Care's home health care services.

Kim Hartwell, physical therapist, was among the first clinicians to visit. Chris's wheelchair broke beyond repair when he was moving the guitar speaker, and Kim helped him secure a new electric wheelchair that would support his mobility and independence.

VNA Care's nurses have been instrumental in managing a complex, six-centimeter-deep wound on Chris's hip as well as a Foley catheter related to his bladder condition for more than a year. His nursing team

includes Kerri O'Donnell, RN, wound/ostomy/continence nurse specialist; Alicia Weaver, RN case manager; and Sierra Fleming, LPN. Their expertise, advocacy, advice, and clinical skill have been essential.

"VNA Care's clinicians are my support system," said Chris. "They've been the closest to what's going on with me, more so than even my doctors. They see me three times a week, and I get most of my guidance from them. They give me confidence to be at home."

For Chris, being home is about more than comfort.

"To be home gives me freedom," said Chris. "I appreciate VNA Care's services more than you can imagine."



Chris Syria has played guitar since he was a teenager. Being at home allows him to pursue this and other special interests whenever he chooses.

Choosing hospice sooner gave grandmother more time with loved ones

Ruth Krigbaum Rich knows it sounds counterintuitive when she says that starting VNA Care's hospice services early actually prolonged her mother Virginia Stone's life.

By the time hospice began, Virginia's health had been steadily declining. Dementia with Parkinsonian symptoms had gradually taken her mobility, and a series of what appeared to be transient ischemic attacks, often called mini-strokes, led the family to make a difficult decision. Rather than continue hospitalizations and aggressive interventions that could not change the course of her illness, they chose to focus on comfort.

When VNA Care's hospice team began visiting Virginia in her home, something shifted.

Nancy Borgatti-Krouse, RN, BSN, carefully monitored every aspect of Virginia's health, watching for subtle changes and addressing potential problems before they escalated, from managing pain to preventing skin breakdown. With expert symptom management and consistent oversight, crises were avoided. Emergency room visits stopped. The rhythm of Virginia's days grew calmer.

"To have that level of proactive care improved everything," Ruth said.

Patients who begin hospice care earlier often live longer with greater quality of life than those who wait. By prioritizing comfort, stabilizing symptoms, and removing the physical and emotional strain of repeated hospitalizations, hospice can ease an enormous burden for both patients and families.

Ruth said she could "trust implicitly" in Nancy's medical knowledge and clinical skills, and valued her compassion, empathy and ability to truly listen. Nancy also brought "an unusual capacity for balancing a lot of moving parts with total patience," coordinating seamlessly with Virginia's private duty caregivers so Virginia could remain where she most wanted to be – at home.

VNA Care's hospice services extend beyond nursing support. The interdisciplinary hospice team also includes physicians and nurse practitioners, social workers, spiritual and bereavement counselors, hospice aides, and trained volunteers.

Timothy Aznavourian, a hospice spiritual counselor, and Marc Reiss, a hospice volunteer and retired nurse, became steady presences in Virginia's final months. As her ability to speak had faded, they met her where she was. Knowing she loved music, Timothy played gentle harp instrumentals on his tablet during his visits. Marc read aloud from her books twice a week, filling the room with familiar words and companionship.

The team's care honored a woman who had lived fully for 92 years. A graduate of Wellesley College, Virginia built a life defined by intellect, leadership,



Virginia Stone was an advocate for education, conservation, and human rights.

curiosity, and devotion to her three children and four grandchildren. Her career included serving as president of C.B. Fisk, Inc., the Gloucester-based pipe organ building company, fostering a culture where skilled craftspeople and staff felt valued in their work. In retirement, she embraced travel, family gatherings, her beloved golden retrievers, and her many special interests. Her love of genealogy even led her to self-publish a book about her Mayflower ancestry.

But in the final chapter of her life, what mattered most was simpler.

"She was content," Ruth remembered. "She was very grateful and happy to be at home."

Because of the proactive, compassionate care provided by VNA Care's hospice team, Virginia's end-of-life journey was not defined by crisis, but by comfort and dignity. She passed peacefully at home on Jan. 19, 2026.

EVENING UNDER THE STARS

BENEFIT FOR VNA CARE'S VISITING NURSES AND HOSPICE CARE

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 6 PM - 8 PM AT MIT ENDICOTT HOUSE, DEDHAM

Cocktail Reception | Small Plate Dining | Live Music | Silent & Live Auction

Donations & Tickets: VNAcare.org/Stars

RN relies on VNA Care to get husband back on feet after knee surgery

With more than a decade as a VNA Care nurse, Melisa Mantha, RN, knows firsthand the benefits of home health care. Yet when her husband Joe needed VNA Care's support after knee replacement surgery, she experienced that work from a completely new perspective.

Joe's knee problems began decades ago with a college soccer injury. Over time, the pain worsened, making it increasingly difficult to play with his two young children, coach their sports teams, and enjoy a round of golf.

After a successful day surgery, Joe received his first VNA Care physical therapy visit within 24 hours of returning home. Susan Walker, PT, supported the Manthas in helping Joe regain mobility and meet his goal of returning to an active lifestyle.

Susan's approach centers on education and empowerment. She ensures patients understand their surgeon's discharge instructions, wound care, medications, and potential complications.

"I really love to teach patients so that they have all the knowledge they need to be successful," she said.

Joe appreciated how Susan adapted their home to be a gym. Chairs, counters, and stairs became part of his therapeutic exercise program, along with creative tools like a simple cookie sheet to reduce friction during knee bends, making the movement easier and less painful. While the Manthas also have traditional exercise equipment, Susan is prepared to teach a full exercise program without using any special tools.

"It's clear that Susan is very experienced and knowledgeable," Joe said. "She encouraged me to just keep doing the exercises, always saying, 'The more you do now, the better off you're going to be.'"

Following Susan's guidance, Joe made steady progress with his wife, children, and even the family's guinea pigs cheering him on. In three weeks, he transitioned to outpatient physical therapy. He is looking forward to enjoying active time with his children and playing golf pain-free.

Melisa said, "Susan was fantastic. She was so creative, patient, calming, and empathetic, but also wise and firm in communicating what Joe needed to do to meet his goals."

For Melisa, experiencing this care firsthand strengthened her appreciation for VNA Care's long-standing expertise in joint replacement therapy. She recalls a time when bypassing a hospital or rehab stay after knee replacement surgery was unheard of, and VNA Care's partnership with surgeons helped pioneer a new approach that allowed patients to return home safely after surgery.

"It feels good to know that we have the expertise and that background, and that we're in good hands," Melisa said.

Being on the receiving end of VNA Care's services also reinforced her commitment as a clinician. "It certainly makes me a better nurse and deepens my appreciation for the work we do," she said. "It furthers my drive to continue delivering high-quality care to my patients."



Susan Walker, PT, loves empowering patients through education. Her visits to Joe Mantha put him on the path to achieving his health goals.



Melisa and Joe Mantha are deeply appreciative of the care, support, and guidance they received from VNA Care.

How to reach us

Services & Programs:
800-521-5539

Website:
VNAcare.org

Donations and Mailing List:
508-658-7700 or giving@vncare.org

Online Donations:
[VNAcare.org/Donors](https://vncare.org/Donors)

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2 Finding peace at the Rose Monahan Home



3 Celebrating your impact on patient care



4 Donors recognize dedicated clinicians



VNA Care Network
VNA of Boston
VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

Fund Development Office

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Woburn, MA 01801

After life-threatening health crisis, VNA Care clinicians help retiree regain health and maintain independence in his own home

After five months in a hospital and rehabilitation facility, Chris Syria came home with one clear goal: *stay there*. At one point during that long stretch, he wasn't sure he would survive – let alone regain the independence he so valued.

Paralyzed in a motorcycle accident in 1975 at age 17, Chris returned home feeling like he had been sent “out into the void” with no community-based services to aid him as he adapted to life as a wheelchair user.

Chris was determined to be active and independent. He pursued a computer science degree and career as a software engineer, coached softball and baseball, and developed a love for playing guitar. Now retired, his goal is to continue living independently and on his own terms for as long as possible.

With the steady support of VNA Care's nurses and other clinicians, he's doing just that.

“There'll be a point when I decide I can't be at home anymore,” he says. “But that point isn't now. I want to enjoy my independence as long as I can. That's what VNA Care makes possible.”

Chris was moving a guitar speaker when it rolled onto his legs and damaged his skin. He developed an infection and was, as he puts it, “laid up in bed for a month. I lost 30 pounds and became malnourished. The bottom fell out on me.”

By the time Chris was hospitalized, he had developed a life-threatening, stage 4 pressure ulcer on his hip. Doctors also diagnosed a neuromuscular dysfunction of the bladder that, if left untreated, could lead to serious



Visiting Nurse Sierra Fleming and Chris Syria

complications, including kidney damage. Five months away from home and unsure what the future would hold took an emotional toll.

VNA Care helps retiree...continued on page 5