Caring Conversations

With all the snow and ice we have had, it is hard to believe spring starts March 20th. Seasonal changes remind me of life transitions. Both will occur no matter what we do. During the month of February, we lost several PACE participants due to death. When deaths occur, I think about the participant and his or her family. The first question I ask myself and the staff is, “Did we honor the participant’s wishes?”

My passion for honoring wishes developed in 1992 after working for Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro. In March of that year, my 47 year old mother was diagnosed with Stage 4 Colon Cancer. My family and I were devastated and angry. Why us? Why my mother? Why now? My mother’s home was the place for all family gatherings and we knew if something happened to her our lives would change forever. My mother lived five wonderful years after her diagnosis and we were fortunate to spend a lot of quality time together. I remember two significant caring conversations that occurred during that time.

The first conversation was between my mother and her doctor. He knew she was a spiritual person because she often spoke of her favorite Bible scriptures during doctor’s appointments. At this appointment, her doctor said, “Mrs. Annie, I need to know what you would want me to do when you and your savior are on the phone line talking. Do you want me to jump in on the line and interrupt the conversation or do you want me to allow the conversation to continue?” My mother looked him straight in the eyes and said “you better not interfere with our conversation.” The doctor made sure my mother understood she was deciding not to have CPR or a ventilator if her heart should stop because of her health condition. He explained he would honor her wish to have quality of life by making sure she was as “pain-free” as possible. This was a significant conversation for me to hear because at that time, I had developed the courage to stand up for my mother’s wishes just like she did for me throughout my life.

The second significant conversation occurred between my mother and our pastor. After praying for my mother and the family, our pastor said, “Annie, I believe we are living in the land of the dying, trying to get to the land of the living.” I can’t explain the sense of peace my mother and I experienced at that moment.

As the Executive Director of PACE of the Triad, I expect our staff to honor our participant’s wishes and involve the family in those discussions. This is a very difficult conversation to have or hear; however, when you honor your loved one’s wishes, you are putting your love into action. Please read the Quality section of this newsletter for information on one of several projects we are doing at PACE to honor wishes especially at life’s transition.

April 16, 2015 is National Healthcare Decisions Day. The April newsletter will include information on the Federal Patient Self Determination Act and information on how you can start the caring conversation.
Dr. K's Medical Minute

Stroke Prevention

Rightly so, stroke is a major fear as we grow older. A stroke (sometimes called a "brain attack") occurs when part of the brain loses its blood supply and is damaged, sometimes permanently. This can occur from a blockage, a blood clot, or bleeding into the brain. Depending on what part of the brain is damaged, stroke victims will have loss of function. This loss could be weakness on one side of the body or problems with speech or thought.

How can we prevent strokes or, if we have had a stroke, how can we prevent another? Medical evidence shows that the main ways to prevent stroke are:

1. Keep blood pressure under excellent control. If you have high blood pressure, take your medications as directed.
2. Do not smoke!
3. No excessive use of alcohol.
4. Keep cholesterol under control. If you have high cholesterol, take your medicines as directed.
5. Use blood thinners (a simple aspirin is the most commonly used).

If you have any questions on how to reduce your risk, please let us know.

NOTES from ELLEN

Enough or Too Much?

Have you ever asked yourself the question “Enough or too much?” Common times for this question are when we wake up and are deciding whether to get out of bed, at meals when we are deciding when to stop eating, and at the store when we are deciding how much of an item to buy. No doubt, we all need enough sleep, adequate nutrition and purchased products to last us until we are at the store again. But, there is a fine line between having enough, and having too much. Same is true when it comes to supplies and services provided by PACE. We want to provide enough, but not too much.

We try to send supplies to your home to last a month, based on how you use an item. For example, if you tell us you use 3 of an item each day, we will send 93 of them to your home each month. If you actually use less than that amount, we need to know. We want you to have enough, but not too much. Let us know when anything we send you starts to pile up. We don’t want you to have to store the extras. And, we don’t want to have excess in the home if the item is changed or discontinued. That would be wasteful.

The same is true of medications. We send enough for a month based on how the medication is ordered. If you are not taking the medication the same way it was ordered, you may start having extra medication in the home. Let us know if that happens. We can work with you to make sure the right amount of medication is sent to you.

We want to provide enough supplies and services to you. We work with you to make a plan of care to provide those. There have been times that we have learned that services we planned were not delivered as planned. If that is the case for you, please let us know as soon as you realize it. We want to provide enough.

Enough or Too Much? I won’t ask you about getting out of bed, or eating, or what you are buying. But I do ask you to help PACE provide enough supplies and services, but not too much. Thanks for your help in this.

Ellen Smith, RN, BS
Center Manager

Quality Corner

This year, the Quality Department will review End of Life care as it pertains to our PACE center. As a part of this project, we will contact families of PACE participants who have passed away. These discussions will take place a few months after the loved one’s passing and will initially take place over the telephone. We will continue using a mail-in survey that asks caregivers about PACE support and assistance during this most difficult time, as well.

These assessments are very important to help us have a solid understanding of our performance during these times. This will help PACE continue to improve our services during all stages of our participant’s lives, even at the end. As always, we appreciate the honest feedback our caregiver families offer us. We look forward to learning new ways to offer even better services to our participants and their loved ones.

Adria Smith
Quality Coordinator

Welcome New PACE Faces

Andy Hoffman
Health Information Tech.

Robin Isley
Activity Aide/Escort

Denise Newsome, RPh
Pharmacist

NOTES from ELLEN
In My Own Words...

Doris Brock  
As told to Kris Dennis,  
NC A & T Student Intern

I’ve attended PACE for over two years and I love this place! I first read about PACE in the newspaper and was inspired to come tour the facility. At the time, I was having major issues with my blood pressure getting too high. I also had an injured right knee and had been diagnosed with sarcoidosis, a lung disease.

The thing I love most about PACE is the fact that the doctors are always here. The biggest challenge I face every day is my diabetes. My sugar drops often and it sometimes scares me. If my blood pressure is giving me trouble, the staff keeps an eye on me. I was never involved in any type of physical or occupational therapy, before I came. PACE has helped me become more mobile. The staff is amazing. They listen and never seem to be in a hurry. I also love to play Bingo and mind games.

Before joining PACE, I also had problems with being patient when socializing with others. I had a tendency to “catch a quick attitude” anytime somebody said something out of the ordinary or if they didn’t respond to things the ways I had expected. PACE has actually changed this! I’ve realized that the reason for my behavior was because I was living alone and so independent. When you surround yourself with others of so many different backgrounds, you learn to respect diversity and to adjust to different personalities. Everybody is different and that’s the one thing you learn at PACE. The participants are wonderful and it is a loving environment. I would recommend this place to anyone who wants to feel important and welcomed.

Each month we will share comments, quotes or testimonials from a PACE participant or caregiver. Submissions are welcomed. Call Nedra Baldwin,  
Director of Community Engagement at 336-550-4054 or email: nedra.baldwin@pacetriad.org.

Dr. K’s Medical Minute

Do Doctors Practice What They Preach?

I just read an interesting article about how physicians wish to be cared for at the end of life and how they actually treat their patients. In 2 different surveys, 80 and 88% of physicians indicated that they wished to receive pain medications but would avoid life sustaining treatment at the end of their lives.

As physicians, we are more aware of the likely value of health care services at the end of life but we physicians often don’t treat our patients the way we would want to be treated. Why not? The answer is very complicated and involves many social, cultural, economic, geographic and health system factors.

Here at PACE, we want to give all of our participants the best care possible. End of life care is an important part of that care. Being able to make your own decisions regarding this is very important. When it is time, consider the question: What is it that doctors know that I don’t know and why is their decision different from what actually happens to most of us?

Dr. Robert Koehler  
Physician & Medical Director

Important Reminder!

As stated in your Enrollment Agreement, the PACE Center is closed one day per year to conduct annual staff education and training. The staff training day is Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

PACE of the Triad  
Adult Day Health Center will be closed Tuesday, April 28, 2015
Caregiver Corner

Participant Advisory Committee

The Participant Advisory Committee (PAC) meets quarterly to share feedback with PACE Executive Director Ursula Robinson and PACE Board Chair Steve Fleming. Family caregivers are encouraged to attend. All meetings are held at the PACE Center.

PAC Meeting Dates

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<tr>
<td>March 12, 2015</td>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>September 17, 2015</td>
<td>2:00 - 3:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11, 2015</td>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>November 12, 2015</td>
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Caregiver Education Sessions

**Home Safety Tips for the Family Caregiver**
*March 19, 2015 – 10:15 am – 11:45 am*
Trinity AME Church Fellowship Hall, 631 E. Florida St., Greensboro, NC 27406
RSVP – Jodi Kolada – ACE - 336-545-4245

**Navigating the Maze of Senior Care Options**
*March, 23, 2015 – 10 am - 12pm*
Well Spring Richardson Auditorium, 4100 Well Spring Dr., Greensboro, NC 27410
RSVP – Jodi Kolada - ACE - 336-545-4245

**Nurturing your Spiritual Life While Being a Family Caregiver**
*March 26, 2015 – 11 am - 12:30pm*
Women’s Hospital Education Center, Classroom 4, 801 Green Valley Rd., Greensboro, NC 27408
RSVP – Jodi Kolada – ACE - 336-545-4245

**What is an Advanced Care Directive and Should We Be Concerned?**
*National Health Care Decisions Day*
*April 16, 2015 – 12 noon – 12:45 pm OR 6 – 6:30 pm*
PACE of the Triad, 1471 E. Cone Blvd., Greensboro, NC 27405
RSVP – PACE of the Triad – 336-550-4040

**Hands on Family Caregiving Skills**
*April 21, 2015 – 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm*
PACE of the Triad, 1471 E. Cone Blvd., Greensboro, NC 27405
RSVP – PACE of the Triad – 336-550-4040

Assisting with basic care tasks such as dressing, bathing, toileting and lifting/transferring can be challenging. Learn and practice ways to prevent injury to the person you are helping and yourself. Elaine Nosal, PACE Occupational Therapist and Jacque Williams, RN, PACE Adult Day Health Coordinator demonstrate useful techniques and tips for family (not professional) caregivers. This event is free, however, pre-registration is requested.