



Meet Charles

Inside this issue:



PHS adds Private Duty Nursing Service page **1**



Message from our Medical Director page **3**



News and Notes page **4**



Hot Topics page **5**



Staff Spotlight page **6**



Kids Being Kids page **6**



Thriving at Home page **7**

PHS adds Private Duty Nursing Service

One more way to care for your child, every day, in every way

Private Duty Nursing has been added to the broad spectrum of services offered by Pediatric Home Service — a change that reflects the company’s long-standing commitment to do everything possible to “take care of the child.”

“Taking a comprehensive approach in caring for our patients allows us to do everything possible to help them live their lives to the fullest,” says PHS President Susan Wingert. It also makes it easier, she adds, for our family caregivers and professional health care partners, who can now have all their questions and concerns answered in one place, with a single phone call.

“Taking care of kids is what we do at PHS,” says Wingert, “and our private duty nurses are uniquely equipped to deal with the complexities of caring for medically-fragile children and the tremendous challenges faced by our families.”



Sandra J. Maguire, BSW, RRT-NPS, LRT, Managing Director of Nursing and Pharmacy 651-604-5176 (right) and Barb Weisenberger, RN, Director of Nursing 651-789-3258 (left) are available to answer any of your questions regarding the new Private Duty Nursing Service.

PHS private duty nurses:

- **Specialize in homecare for kids.** PHS private duty nurses are licensed and trained by PHS education and clinical staff in the specialized discipline of caring for young patients at home.

- **Function as members of multidisciplinary teams.** They are supported by the comprehensive array of pediatric services offered by PHS, and work closely with respiratory therapists, infusion nurses, pharmacists, asthma educators, dietitians, and medical social workers to ensure safe, consistent care.
- **Are available and adaptable.** PHS private duty nurses are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, per physician orders. They are also supported by supervisory clinical staff on call 24/7.
- **Listen and communicate.** They understand that it can be difficult to have non-family caregivers in the home, coming and going at all hours — and are trained to respect family boundaries and work hard to adjust to the dynamics of every household.

Questions to ask when choosing a nursing agency

Families make many decisions when bringing a child with special needs home from the hospital — often among them is choosing a DME company and nursing agency to provide extended in-home care. It’s important to find one that meets both immediate and long-term needs. Ask questions before making a selection. Find a company that is a good fit for you and your family.

Following are some commonly asked questions when selecting a nursing agency, along with PHS answers:

Does your company comply with any standards of care or have any licenses?

PHS is accredited by The Joint Commission, which is the most commonly used accrediting body for hospitals and homecare providers. We also have a State Home Care license and are a member of MHCA (Minnesota Home Care Association) Pediatric Council.

Continued on page 2

PHS Services

- Respiratory Therapy
- Infusion Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Private Duty Nursing
- In-Home Asthma Management
- Clinical Support Services

Pediatric Home Service (PHS)

is an independent pediatric homecare company that provides specialized health care services to technology-supported children — in their homes, with their families. We recognize and understand the different needs of infants, children, and adolescents. We ensure continuity of care by working together with health care professionals, payers, and family caregivers.

The Pulse is published quarterly by Pediatric Home Service for clients, professional partners, the health care community and other friends of PHS. We welcome your suggestions and story ideas. If you have comments or questions or would like to be placed on the mailing list, please contact:

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Follow us:    

What will my responsibilities be in the care of my child at home if I choose PHS?

We are not in the home as a replacement to the parent; rather we are there to assist parents in the care of their medically-fragile child. Responsible family members will be trained in all of the patient's cares and can determine which cares they wish to do themselves and which they would like the nurse to perform.

What kind of training do your nurses receive?

All PHS nurses receive extensive orientation training prior to caring for a patient in the home. This orientation includes but is not limited to: comprehensive pediatric assessments, equipment competency, emergency response, and CPR certification.

"We understand that having people in your home who are not family can feel like an intrusion, no matter how necessary the intrusion may be. At PHS, we work with families to do our best to accommodate their schedules and household dynamics, in addition to providing the highest quality home nursing care."
- PHS President
Susan Wingert

Help us GO GREEN

Small actions can make a big difference when it comes to protecting our environment. If you'd like to help PHS GO GREEN, visit the PHS website homepage and check the corresponding box, to indicate that you would like to receive product alerts, *The Pulse* newsletter, or PHS satisfaction surveys via email rather than in the mail.

How do you screen your nurses?

Upon employment, all PHS nurses must submit to a thorough and comprehensive background check and drug test. At the time of hire and each subsequent year, all licenses are verified from the primary source and each name is checked against the federal registry for fraud and abuse.

Are nursing hours scheduled according to the needs of my child and family?

PHS works with your family so that your needs are met based upon physician orders. If a private duty nurse is unavailable for a shift, every effort is made to have a private duty nurse who has been oriented to your child fill the shift; if unsuccessful, family backup takes effect.

What type of information is shared among nurses, family, PHS office and physicians involved in the patient's care?

Each PHS patient has an electronic chart in our database that the nurse in the home updates throughout the day. Routine reports are sent to the appropriate physician as needed.

- An electronic Medication Administration Record (MAR) is kept up-to-date by the nurse in the home and is available for physicians and pharmacists information.
- There is a communication book in the home for private duty nurses and family use.
- There is also a shift report at shift change between private duty nurses.
- We comply fully with all HIPAA guidelines.

Can the agency provide references?

Yes, PHS can provide you a list of physicians, hospital care managers, and families that currently use our services.

For more important information and frequently asked questions about PHS's Private Duty Nursing Service, visit our website at www.pediatrichomeservice.com/services-private-duty-nursing.php.



Message from our Medical Director

Dr. Roy C. Maynard

Adding private duty nursing closes the loop in continuity of care

As a hospital-based physician, I learned the vital importance of consistent, seamless care for each patient. I'm proud that PHS will now enhance its pediatric homecare services. Starting in January, PHS will embark on another undertaking to close the loop on taking care of the child as we add private duty nursing service.

"This comprehensive approach to managing care for medically complex children in the home will enhance the quality of life for these patients and their families."

First, a brief look back

For the past 21 years, PHS has provided in-home care for medically complex children with special needs. At first, this high-tech care at home focused on supporting children with chronic respiratory failure. At the time, right here in the Midwest, caregivers established a new benchmark by managing care for ventilator-dependent children — safely at home in a nurturing environment with their families.

Adding care to fit added needs

From the start, having skilled health care providers in the home resulted in good outcomes, improved parent satisfaction and decreased health care costs. This success contributed to PHS's growth and expansion. For instance, PHS added nutritional consultation to ensure appropriate adjustments in feeding regimens for each child's unique calorie requirements. PHS also added specialty pharmacy and a home infusion team. PHS now provides home infusion services for children with multiple diagnoses including immunodeficiency, collagen vascular disease, short bowel syndrome, cystic fibrosis, cancer, heart disease, chronic infections, and metabolism issues.

Adding private duty nursing services

Now, PHS is adding private duty nursing services. These services will be available for infants and children being discharged from area hospitals who require skilled nursing care. PHS's licensed extended-care nurses will be well-trained by PHS educational and clinical staff in all aspects of home medical equipment and patient management. Physician-ordered nursing hours will be available 24 hrs/day and up to 7 days a week. PHS supervisory clinical staff will also be on call for patient related issues on a 24-hour per day basis.

Uniquely coordinated care

One priority is to develop tools that facilitate effective communication between homecare staff members, the child's primary doctor and other health care providers for safe, practical management of both acute and chronic illnesses. For example, with a single phone call, discharge planners and other health care providers can now access and arrange all components of an inclusive homecare program to efficiently, promptly discharge these children with complex medical needs.

PHS homecare nurses will partner with other PHS clinical staff members from respiratory therapy, infusion, pharmacy, medical social worker, and clinical support services. Together, this multidisciplinary team will provide an unparalleled and unique coordination of care. This comprehensive approach to managing care for medically complex children in the home will enhance the quality of life for these patients and their families. This approach will also assure continuity of care, decrease re-hospitalization, and improve family satisfaction.

PHS welcomes the opportunity to enhance the life experiences of children and their families in the home. ■

Dr. Maynard is board-certified by the American Academy of Pediatrics in general pediatrics, pediatric pulmonology and neonatology.

C'mon online!

Join the PHS online community. Post pictures, share stories, give tips, comment on our blog, and connect with other families facing similar challenges. Lend support and help celebrate the achievements of children who overcome tremendous medical challenges to live full and happy lives at home.

Here's where you'll find us:

-  PHS Thrive blog at <http://www.pediatrichomeservice.com/blog/>
-  Twitter at <http://twitter.com/PHSKidsThrive>
-  Flickr at http://www.flickr.com/photos/pediatric_home_service
-  YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/pediatrichomeservice>

On the Sharing Care beat

PHS making a difference

Giving with thanks

In keeping with our mission to take care of the child, PHS supports the efforts of many like-minded organizations. Since our last issue, Sharing Care has supported the following organizations:

Emergency Food Shelf Network

PHS collected and donated Thanksgiving food items and cash to the Emergency Food Shelf Network, which assists needy individuals and families. As a group, PHS collected 211 pounds of food that was delivered on November 22, just in time to thankfully give to those in need.

Toys for Tots

Every child should get a toy for the holidays. From November 23 to December 19, PHS employees and family caregivers collected over 300 toys that were donated to Toys for Tots. A team of PHS Sharing Care Volunteers dropped off the toys to the KARE11 booth on December 19. The toys were distributed to children in need throughout the Twin Cities.



PHS Sharing Care volunteers with Marines outside the KARE11 Toys for Tots drop off tent with a van full of toys.



Boxes and bags full of toys donated by PHS employees to support Toys for Tots.

Gutter Bowl

PHS will participate in Dave Lee's Gutter Bowl 5 benefiting the University of Minnesota Children's Amplatz Hospital.

PHS has participated in all five events. As an Amplatz Adopt-A-Room Corporate Sponsor (<http://www.mmf.umn.edu/children/adoptaroom/sponsors.cfm>), PHS is excited to team up with Amplatz Children's Hospital and WCCO again this year to raise money to care for sick children in our community. The Gutter Bowl will take place at the Brunswick Zone in Brooklyn Park, featuring a live WCCO broadcast on Feb. 18. As a sponsor of the Adopt-A-Room program, PHS has made a financial commitment to Amplatz Children's Hospital.

WCCO Let's Kick Hunger

One in seven Americans is struggling to put enough food on the table this year, to help out, PHS made a monetary donation to benefit Taste of the NFL and Second Harvest Heartland through the 13-hour, WCCO Let's Kick Hunger radiothon on January 8 at the Mall of America.



Get a weekly dose of PHS in our new blog



David Mesick speaks to PHS about the passing of his son and the importance of good customer service.

Need advice from other parents with medically-fragile kids? Check out the PHS blog.

As part of its new website, PHS has ramped up its social media presence with a blog and Twitter account. Blog posts, added at least once a week, highlight timely information from and for PHS kids, families, and others. For instance, recent posts provided tips for a trip to the Minnesota State Fair with medically-fragile kids, a back-to-school checklist for kids with asthma, and suggestions on protecting home medical equipment from storm-related power outages.

We're always looking for blog topic ideas from our PHS families. See what blog topics can help you and your family and join the conversation at PediatricHomeService.com

We're also tweeting! Follow PHS on Twitter @PHSKidsThrive



Hot Topics

Your input matters

Feedback from customer surveys leads to changes that benefit you

At PHS, we want to know what's working — and what isn't — so we can continually improve our services. Your feedback, as a patient caregiver, health care professional, or patient, is one of the best methods we have in making those determinations. "We accept the premise that there are always areas for improvement," says Pam Clifton, PHS Senior Vice President of Operations. So, with that in mind, we continually ask:

- *What is PHS doing that we should continue? Or discontinue?*
- *Is there something we should be doing that we are not?*

We sincerely want to know what you think.



Pam Clifton, Senior Vice President, Operations, welcomes feedback on your experience with PHS. Please feel free to contact her at: 651-604-5162 or pjclifton@pediatrighomeservice.com.

How it works

PHS clients are surveyed once a year, slightly more often if they are new to the company. Surveys are patient specific, which means that you are only going to get questions that relate to the services you receive or deal with in some capacity.

Returned surveys are emailed to managers weekly for review and follow-up as needed.

Respondents who indicate anything less than the highest levels of satisfaction (and include contact information) will be contacted by PHS so we learn how we can make their experience better.

In the past year, PHS contacted 87 people (out of 230 returned surveys) or 37.8 percent of respondents.

*"We accept the premise that there are always areas for improvement."
- Pam Clifton, Senior Vice President, Operations*

You talk, we listen

There's always room for improvement. Following are some of the changes that resulted from customer feedback:

- **We changed the survey format:** switched from two pages to one, and made the questions more service specific.
- **We continue with live phone service:** the importance of having calls answered by a live person has been a recurring comment from families. It remains important to PHS to ensure calls are answered cheerfully and directed quickly; for that reason, we do not use an automated phone system.
- **We added private duty nursing service:** for years, many people have responded to the question, "What is the one thing we're not doing that we should be doing?" by answering "offer extended hours nursing."
- **We improved the "usability" of our education materials:** redesigning the layout, adding more photos to demonstrate techniques, and changing how information is delivered. ■

6 important things to know about PHS surveys

1. You might win a prize. We're serious about wanting your input so we're offering an incentive: we hold a drawing quarterly for a \$100 Visa gift card that is accepted at most retail locations. Anyone who includes contact information on a returned survey is eligible for the drawing.
2. When respondents say something needs to happen, we'll take action. Perhaps it's a quick fix, or something that requires further investigation to find a feasible solution.
3. Survey results are compiled quarterly and shared with all staff. This information motivates employees to continually strive to achieve great customer service.
4. If a survey mentions a specific employee, a copy of the survey will be shared with the employee.
5. In 2005, PHS began benchmarking our patient satisfaction results with Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP). This real-time data analysis allows us to quantify our results and compare them with other homecare organizations and our peers.
6. Once we see a trend in responses and are satisfied we are succeeding in a specific area, we move on to a new area/question so that we are always learning, continually improving.

BCBS no longer paying for home 4-channel studies

Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Minnesota has notified PHS that pneumograms are no longer covered by BCBS unless ordered by a physician to wean a patient from an apnea monitor. If you have any questions about this policy change, please contact PHS Customer Service for assistance.



Staff Spotlight

Meet Jason

Making very special deliveries

Despite ice storms, blizzards, and tornado sightings, PHS service specialists promptly deliver supplies to patients' families.

"I once drove seven hours through an ice storm to New Ulm, a trip that should take two hours," recalls Jason Schmidt, a PHS service specialist. "Another time near Verndale, I watched a tornado out my van window. Luckily, it never touched down.

"What I remember most of all from every bad weather driving experience is the family's gratefulness. All our service specialists, clinicians, and other staff members have driven through nasty weather to bring supplies and care to our patients in a timely, courteous manner. I'm so proud of our team's dedication."

Everyone steps up

"Everyone here takes every measure possible to ensure that patients don't need to go to the hospital," Jason says with a smile. "That's a hassle for the family, the child, and everyone involved. Overall, it's just better to keep them safe at home."

Jason has worked as a PHS service specialist for 10 years, and was recently promoted to Lead Service Specialist. His responsibilities include analyzing product delivery

schedules, planning each of the drivers' routes, checking on last-minute deliveries, and making his own delivery runs.

"Before this position, I delivered paint and supplies to auto body shops," he explains. "My mother-in-law, worked for PHS as a customer service representative and recommended that I apply here."

Amazing PHS families

"I most enjoy making connections with our families. For example, one time I delivered supplies to a group home and a young girl asked if I could just sit and talk with her. I did. It brightened my day perhaps more than hers," Jason says. "PHS patients and their families are amazing."

Jason has a new appreciation for kids' families as a new dad. He and his wife of nine years, Laura, have a five-month-old daughter, Rebecca, and love spending all their free time with her.

Born in Chicago, Jason lived in four different states while growing up, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oregon, and California. He, and his family now live in Forest Lake, where they are caretakers for a home on a lake. They share their home with a dog and two cats.



Jason's newest passion – his daughter. Pictured here with wife Laura and daughter Rebecca.

Police volunteer, hockey fan, and more
Jason is currently attending Century College for Law Enforcement, and he volunteers for an area police department.

Jason's other favorites: The color dark blue, German food, University of Minnesota Gopher hockey, riding his BMW R1200R motorcycle, candy (especially chocolate), Germany/Austria as a vacation destination and Starbucks' very berry coffee cake. "That's one of my stops every morning," Jason admits.

Thanks to Jason, patients and families get exactly the products and supplies they need—when needed. ■



Kids Being Kids

Catch 'em if you can

Emerson, Emily, Kael and Lucas



PHS parents don't let their children's special needs keep them from having fun all winter. Of course infection prevention and control is always important, yet look at these PHS kids, being kids!

Little Emerson loves sled rides, and she's making progress getting off her ventilator, which some didn't think was possible a few months ago. She has DiGeorge Syndrome, but her parents don't let it stop them from enjoying plenty of fun in every season.

Emily is all revved up with places to go alongside her brother. Emily was born a preemie with underdeveloped lungs, scoliosis and a small thorax. Today, she's off her vent/trach on the trails and ready to turn 10 this year.

Picture this: We're on the lookout for photos of "kids being kids" to consider for use in future issues *The Pulse*. Photos can be of any kid activity, from drawing a picture to trick or treating to playing with pets. Submit photos via email to dmakerson@pediatrixhomeservice.com. We'll contact you if your photo is chosen.



Thriving at Home

Look who's this year's Honorary Chairperson

PHS proudly sponsors "Charlie's Angels" team for 2011 Juvenile Arthritis March

For the sixth consecutive year, Charles Dias will walk in the Juvenile Arthritis March (JAM) at the Mall of America on March 5. Charles will have just celebrated his ninth birthday. Again this year, PHS Registered Dietitian Janelle Peterson, RD, LD, CNSD, and her own sons will walk with Charles' team along with other PHS volunteers. PHS will also sponsor the team of "Charlie's Angels," helping support the 6,000 kids in Minnesota with arthritis.

*"His immune system is weak, so we prefer to keep him out of the hospital."
- Louise Dias*

Charles is enjoying a little extra attention leading up to this year's event, too, as the Honorary Chairperson promoting JAM. Consistently a top fundraiser, Charles and his family have been recognized at previous events and "it doesn't really affect him. He just enjoys seeing all his friends for the day," explains his mom, Louise. Charles' family also includes his dad, Greg, and four older siblings.



Rena Sarigianopoulos, KARE 11, shown here with Charles, also has arthritis and is a fervent supporter of the cause.

A child can have arthritis?

"When he was two years old, Charles had unexplained fevers, rashes, and joint pain, and was in and out of consciousness. He spent 37 days in the hospital," Louise recalls. "He was finally diagnosed with systematic juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, or JRA. We were shocked. Like other families, we had no idea a child could have arthritis."

Janelle first met Louise when the Dias' medical insurance company requested a visit from PHS to verify the need for his feeding tube. "Charles is also orally averse and has gastroesophageal reflux disease, so the feeding tube provides his total nutrition," Janelle says. "He still has the tube, and I've been working with them ever since."

21 syringes a day

Charles has had several other diagnoses in his short life, including: malrotation of his intestine; mildly persistent asthma; Arnold-Chiari malformation; inflammation of the eyes and connective tissue disorder, both of which are related to his JRA; autonomic dysfunction symptoms of fevers, flushing, sweating, and mottled skin; hypothyroidism, and ADHD, OCD, and oppositional defiant disorder.

"Louise is very organized. She does a great job managing his care and medical appointments. Charles gets his G-tube feedings overnight so it doesn't disrupt his days at school and other activities. PHS provides equipment and supplies, and we have helped with Charles' sleep studies," Janelle says.

Louise adds, "I didn't ever think I'd be swapping out feeding tubes and administering medications. Charles gets 21 syringes of meds each day. We also go to the University of Minnesota Hospital once each month. When we first brought him home, it was overwhelming yet I've learned a lot and PHS has been very helpful. A PHS technician even came to our home at 3 a.m. on one occasion to change out a sleep study machine."

Lego play, games, and third grade

Charles attends third grade, and enjoys playing with Lego sets and video games.



Rena Sarigianopoulos, KARE 11, interviewing Charles.

He steers clear of contact sports, which could aggravate his conditions with impact to his joints and connective tissues. He hasn't been admitted to the hospital for several years. "His immune system is weak, so we prefer to keep him out of the hospital," his mom explains.

Even so, he does have painful flare-ups. "He tells his mom when he's getting uncomfortable, and she is skilled at helping manage his medications to control his pain," Janelle says.

Change war

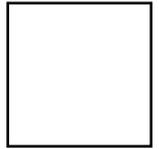
Again this year, his school classmates will participate in his JAM fundraising efforts. "Last year we had a 'change war,' where various classes brought in their spare change. The winning classroom earned a pizza party," Louise says. "We also write lots of letters, and people are very generous."

Visit Charles' fundraising page for the JAM event and help raise money for Juvenile Arthritis at <http://jam2011.kintera.org/charliesangels>

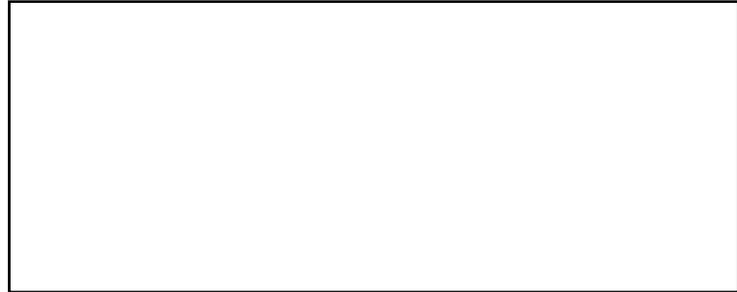
Marching in March

"JAM is an excellent event. It's great for younger kids to see older children who also have juvenile arthritis thriving and walking. All the funds raised go to camp scholarships, research and other programs to help kids like Charles thrive," Janelle says. "Helping care for him and joining his family for JAM has been pure joy." ■

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PHS has earned the Joint Commission's
Gold Seal of Approval™



The Pulse

news for our health care partners

Private Duty Nursing Service
completes the circle of care

Come rain or snow, Jason will
get your deliveries to you

Sharing Care collects over 300
toys for Toys for Tots

Charles thrives at home

Tell us what you think — fill out
a survey