

COVID Never Slowed Us Down

A Continuing Commitment to Care, Comfort, and Heal

The COVID-19 pandemic swept over the globe like a tsunami, washing away any sense of safety, security or certainty, and turning the already taxing work lives of medical professionals into daily crises.

The ability of Redeemer's Home Care and Hospice and Support at Home teams to lead by listening, prioritize patient and staff safety, and focus on clinical best practices was exemplary. Like the best jugglers, our Home Care and Hospice and Support at Home teams kept every ball in the air and made it look effortless.

Acknowledging the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic and grateful for the tenacity of Redeemer Health caregivers, managers made sure to not just check in on patients, but team members as well. Ultimately, everyone on the Redeemer Home Care team played a critical role in the care of patients and each other.

Adapting to an Ever-Changing Environment

When the pandemic began, we needed to make critical adaptations, made much harder by constantly evolving CDC guidelines.

Not surprisingly, Redeemer Home Care team members did not balk at change. As protocols were altered, our caregivers adjusted patient therapy practices. Social workers and chaplains turned to video visits. Office-based staff adopted new safety protocols, and some began working from home.

Internal communication regarding planning, protocols, and changes in practice became paramount. Team members were able to voice their questions and concerns to a constantly present management team, while senior leadership made every effort to continually provide teams with the most current and accurate information.

Meeting the Needs to Care, Comfort, and Heal

Unlike other home care and hospice agencies, Redeemer Home Care accepted patients throughout the pandemic, although determining which team members were available to work and which patients they could visit became a daily concern.

Some patients didn't want anyone coming into their homes, while others were completely isolated. There were also new patients who had no one to care for them once they were able to return home after battling COVID in the hospital. Coordinating all of this would have been impossible without the dedication and flexibility of our teams, who ensured the needs and preferences of each individual patient.



Going Above and Beyond

Indeed, saving lives and treating every patient with dignity was routine in pre-COVID times, but the pandemic spotlighted the exemplary selflessness of the Redeemer Home Care, Hospice, and Support At Home teams.

There are so many instances we can point to, but a couple stand out, like when a Home Care RN expertly switched gears to save a patient's life when the patient's breathing suddenly stopped and she became unresponsive during a routine wound care visit. The nurse quickly performed CPR until the women could be hospitalized. Two weeks later, the nurse followed up with the grateful patient, who was back to normal and cooking a meal for her grandchildren.



Another poignant example of how our team goes above and beyond also stands out.

When an on-call hospice nurse arrived at the home of a recently deceased patient her intention was to pronounce the patient and offer support to the family. Yet, the patient's daughter asked if the nurse could do something quite out of the ordinary. Because of back issues, the daughter had been unable to finish the Jewish traditional task of covering the mirrors in the house after one has passed. The nurse was more than happy to comply.

Innovative New Programs

Team members remained committed find innovative ways to implement current technology as the global crisis continued to evolve. The "Reconstructive Surgery pilot," in partnership with Fox Chase Cancer Center, became a reality during the height of the pandemic. This allowed surgeons to view the recovery process of their patients in the home, three days post-surgery, and prevented the patient from unnecessarily returning to the hospital.



Finding out a way to monitor patients at home in order to avoid inpatient hospitalization led to the expansion of a pulse oximetry program. Many Redeemer Health staff who had been infected with COVID served as the starting population. Each person received pulse oximeters, thermometers, and a log to record results. A nurse called them, sometimes several times a day, to review those results and determine if they needed more home visits, home oxygen therapy, or more emergent care. Eventually, program began to spread from Redeemer staff to the patient population. Some are still using the pulse oximeter program over a year later.

The Road Ahead

As a society we continue to struggle with the aftermath of lost loved ones, unemployment, and lonelier lives. Without the adrenaline fuel of the past year, health care staff find themselves exhausted and burned out.

Yet, throughout so many difficult days, the Redeemer Home Care, Hospice, and Support At Home team—visit and non-visit staff—didn't simply show up, they gave it their all, working many extra hours and always looking out for their patients and each other. Everyone pulled together, continually came to work, and followed precautions.

As we look forward, "teamwork" and "it takes a village" have become easy clichés that in many work lives can seem more like fantasy than reality. But at Redeemer Home Care, Hospice and Support At Home, we've seen solid proof that compassionate commitment to care never stops, no matter what.