

Home is where the healthcare is for more Rockcastle residents

If you ask hospital patients what they want most, they're likely to say they want to go home. In many cases, patients can return home within days, or even hours, of surgery. Although it is desirable to have patients in the least restrictive setting, recovery at home can pose challenges for patients and their families.

"I was at my wife's end," said Barbara Rector, referring to the point at which she called Dr. Michael Hamilton for help.

Rector was working full-time, trying to manage the house, and taking care of her husband, Johnny, who was recovering from open heart surgery.

Visits from Rockcastle Hospital Home Health nurses were just what the doctor ordered for the Rectors.

Johnny Rector received the care he needed to improve, and Barbara

Rector got peace of mind while she was away from the house. During home visits throughout the week, Registered Nurse Miriam Mullins monitored Johnny's health and Home Health Aide Jennifer Bengt helped him with his personal care and light meals.

"It meant so much to have them here," said Barbara Rector. "I really mean that."

Home health services are not new to the county. The Cumberland Valley Health Department offers home

healthcare, but physicians and community leaders saw a need for additional services, said Kay Fielder, director of Rockcastle Hospital Home Health.

"Our goal is to make home health care available for more patients and to expand the types of services they can

receive," said Fielder. "This is possible because we are an extension of Rockcastle Hospital and can offer patients additional therapies through hospital resources."

Patients must be homebound, need the skills of a nurse, physical, or speech therapist and be under the care of a physician to qualify for services in most cases.

Rockcastle Hospital Home Health patients can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week and talk to a nurse. If needed, a home health nurse or therapist will make a visit to the patient's home at night or on weekends.

This was necessary during Johnny Rector's recovery process, when complications developed.

"It's amazing how they can come in and care for you. It's wonderful," said Johnny Rector. "They treated me like family."

While Rector received primarily nursing and personal care assistance before his recent discharge from the program, some patients receive visits from physical, speech or respiratory therapists.

Marie Robbins, 80, had lived independently in her home until her hip was broken by a fall in March. Her daughter, Frances Breedlove, came to stay with her during her recuperation period.

Prior experience in caring for her husband had taught Breedlove that the caregiver's role is often more than one person can stand and bear. She welcomed the medical knowledge and physical help provided by nurses, aides and therapists.

"I would have become exhausted without their help," she said.

Breedlove also appreciated the educational role the home health professionals provide. When she observed that her mother had the tendency to fall backwards when standing, Mullins, the home health nurse, explained that her medication side effects or her medical condition could be causing it.

And, when Robbins experienced some pain with a catheter, it only took a late-night call to Mullins for tips on better positioning it to make her mother more comfortable.

The goal of the various therapists Robbins is receiving is to help her resume her independent lifestyle.

Independence was also on Shelby Phelps' mind when she contacted Rockcastle Hospital Home Health. She had a special request that she believed would help her 2-year-old son, Mavrick Hodge.

Medical conditions required Mavrick to have a tracheotomy, and opening at the base of his throat that allows him to breathe. Phelps thought her son was capable of breathing through his nose and mouth, but was afraid to close the tracheotomy, often called a trach, without professional assistance.

"I wanted a respiratory care specialist to cap off his trach. If something were to happen they could respond appropriately," said Phelps. "It was a lot simpler than I thought. They monitored him for an hour to be sure his oxygen levels were good and the respiratory therapist did some teaching, such as how long to leave it capped."

Mavrick has responded well and is still learning to adapt to the type of breathing most of us take for granted. Phelps reported that he has become more talkative as a result.

Mullins said Mavrick's mother deserves credit for much of his prog-

ress because she has learned to manage many of the complex tasks related to his ongoing care. But, with three children at home, the assistance of home health professionals has made a significant difference for Phelps.

"The fact that they can come out to your home, and you don't have to pack up all the kids, travel to the medical office and wait to be seen nearly every day gives me a little more freedom and the chance to get more of my other chores done," she said.

Children often do not qualify for home health services through their insurance or government health plan because they are considered "portable." That conflicts with the primary requirement that home health patients be homebound.

Fielder said the best way to find out if a child or adult qualifies is to call Rockcastle Hospital Home

Health's office.

"Sometimes it just takes a few questions for us to help someone know if they qualify and to what extent their health plan covers visits," she said.

Rockcastle Hospital Home Health is licensed by the State and Federal Licensure. The program will be reviewed this fall by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), which is a voluntary program that evaluates a facility's quality of care and management. Last year, Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center and the Rockcastle Medical Arts center were awarded a three-year "Accreditation" by JCAHO.

Some people may find it odd that Rockcastle Hospital has started this program at a time when insurance payments and Medicare reimbursements are decreasing for home health

Cont. to A8

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Meeting Location - Central Administration Offices

July 13, 2000

7:00 p.m.

Special Meeting
Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Silent Prayer
- B. Roll Call
- C. Reading of Board Team Commitments

2. ADOPT AGENDA/ACTION

3. COMMUNICATIONS:

A.

4. OPERATIONS/ACTIONS

- A. Approve minutes of the June 13, 2000 regular monthly meeting
- B. Approve bills for payment
- C. Approve SIG (State Improvement Grant) Middle School Initiative 1.6.4 Master Agreement (\$2,500.00 Budget)
- D. Approve authorization/advertisement for Year Book Bid Proposals for Rockcastle County High & Middle Schools
- E. Approve acceptance of coal bid to Jeff Woodall Trucking for 2000 - 2001 school year
- F. Approve school trips

Date	School	Grade	#	Location
7/21	RCHS	9-12	22	EKU

5. DISCUSSION/ACTION

- A. Review/approve proposed increase in meal prices for the 2000 - 2001 school year
- B. Review/approve program contract with Lake Cumberland Community Services Organization (\$26,670.00 Budget) (Job Training for high school and out of school youth)
- C. Review/approve acceptance of Bids for Standard Ten Panel Drug Test, JROTC Precision Air Rifles and Equipment and Vending Services for cold drinks (comparative bids will be available at board meeting)

6. DISCUSSION/REVIEW

- A. Review monthly financial report(s)
- B. Review annual policy and procedure update (#23)
- C. Review Board Policies (03.125 & 03.225)
- D. Review Perpetual Calendar
- E. Review BES construction project
- F. Other

7. ADJOURNMENT

Superintendent's Personnel Actions Report
June 13, 2000 - July 11, 2000

Appointments are subject to meeting certification and other state/local requirements. All salaries/wages in compliance with Board approved salary schedule. Assignments are as best projected at the current date and are subject to alteration as permitted by law. Personnel assigned to individual schools are employed after the principal has consulted with the SBDN Council, submits to the superintendent the recommendation and the superintendent then notifies the individual of official employment.

CERTIFIED

07/01/00	Brandon Hargis	Football Coach, RCMS
08/08/00	Karen Wilson	Extra Duty Supplement Speech-Language Pathologist
08/08/00	James D. Harris	Districtwide Special Education Teacher
08/08/00	Gina Wilson	RCMS Primary Teacher/BES
08/08/00	Steven Bullock	Alternative School Coordinator

CLASSIFIED

RESIGNATION 6/30/00	Cindy Witt Ham	Teacher, RCBS
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Moving about her house independently is an important goal for Marie Robbins, who had hip replacement surgery. She is learning to walk again with the assistance of Rockcastle Hospital Home Health Physical Therapist Nathan Holbrook.

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