

Safer at Home

Care plan improves
quality of life



Melissa Hill and Greg Bridges celebrate seven years of business with Home Care Assistance.

by James Coburn - staff writer

Home Care Assistance helps to maintain a clean, safe and healthy environment for its clients, says Melissa Hill and Greg Bridges, owners of the family-owned company based in Edmond.

"We just hit our seven-year anniversary milestone," Hill said.

The award-winning company provides non-medical care. As a registered nurse, Bridges writes a care plan based on an assessment he makes for individuals.

A home health care company might overlap

See SAFER Page 2

INTEGRIS CVH Women's Center Breaks 20 Year Record for Baby Deliveries



Congratulations to the entire INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital Women's Center care team for ending the month of August with a record breaking 110 deliveries! This remarkable total surpasses their previous record of 106 deliveries since the hospital opened 20 years ago.

The INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital Women's Center team, including 16 nationally certified nurses, usually averages 83 deliveries a month but rose to the occasion with 110 deliveries in the month of August, including four sets of twins delivered within 48 hours. The team saw an additional 271 outpatients.

See INTEGRIS Page 3

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SAFER

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in the company's involvement.

"It's almost synergistic, the whole thing that 1 and 1 makes 3. We partner up with home health. It's just great because they know our mission, and they know our care methodology. We're consistent — we're conscientious — we're careful."

Home health might have a physical therapist coming into the home once a week for treatment.

"Our caregivers serve as cheerleaders and guide them and encourage them to have them go through their exercises which really expedites recovery," he said.

The caregivers do not diagnose but simply assess and report back to Bridges. Home Care Assistance handles bathing, grooming, sometimes feeding, dressing, safety, transfers, medication reminders and housekeeping. Caregivers report unusual health problems that might pop up or have been overlooked.

Home Care Assistance is on-call 24/7. There is a lot of in-house training to maximize their potential to serve their clients' needs. Caregivers also provide social interaction which is a much-needed resource to keep individuals from being isolated in their own communities. Balanced care provides emotional, physical and spiritual support. Pathways are secured for safe mobility.

"As a young start-up business seven years ago, we've evolved a lot," Hill said. "Over time, I think, we've really established Home Care Assistance as the highest quality care provider in this market. So, our business has grown, and the demand for in-home services is growing. During COVID I think people really came to terms that they are safer at home."

A caregiver's assignment is without rotation. A personalized individual caregiver limits the exposure that a resident would otherwise have to people. Home Care Assistance has evolved its employee care program as well with training and development.

"We have some super people with us and some very tenured employees. So, we really invest a lot with our employees in helping them be highly satisfied," she added.

As they follow the CDC guidelines, caregivers have a high immunization rate and follow the protocol of wearing a protective mask to help reduce the risk of an exposure. Infection control means asking employees to live a

lifestyle that considers the everyday health of their clients. Employees are asked daily if they feel sick, and they sign a form, that in-turn is another safety approach.

Balanced care involves an involved assessment by a registered nurse in the client's home. The RN will evaluate the home including any danger points that could impair a client's security. There has never been a fall with injury during the seven years that Home Care Assistance has been protecting its clients.

"We turn those into tasks that are followed in the care plan," Bridges said. "It guides our caregivers on safety and best practices. It's documented electronically and we follow the real-time feedback on that."

Bridges notes the occurrence of a tar-like stool, indicating internal bleeding. And recently he assessed someone whose blood pressure changed from low to high when changing from sitting to standing. These indications are reported to the client's physician.

Bridges is a seasoned nurse having worked in acute care, hospice, and home health. He said that Home Care Assistance operates closest to home health, but without doing the medical component of care. Services are private pay without being contracted with Medicare.

"You really get to know them and the family intimately," Bridges said.

Caregivers are emotionally invested in their clients' successes and empathizing with their challenges. Some of the clients are living with memory loss. It can be heartbreaking to see a client going through stages of dementia.

"You learn to ride some of the tough times out with them," he said.

A consistent assignment by one caregiver in the home will oftentimes help the individual to relax due their familiarity with a caregiver. It's very touching for the caregiver to see their client feel safe at home.

Families are their clients as well, as Home Care Assistance is constantly working with the family by getting feedback, Hill said.

"A lot of our clients are fortunate to be very local and can be involved in the care team and work very closely with us," Hill said. "But we also support people who have nobody. Their kids are in other states and are raising families. So, they really rely on us as the eyes and ears locally to be with mom or dad."

For more information visit:
www.homecareassistanceoklahoma.com

INTEGRIS

Continued from Page 1

The entire team of amazing caregivers, nurses and physicians work together to create an environment that gets the job done, coming in early, staying late and working extra shifts to ensure the unit is always covered.

Congratulations for a job well done and for bringing so many beautiful babies into the world!



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CAREERS IN NURSING

FLIGHT NURSE CONTINUES TO SOAR: AIR EVAC LIFETEAM IN ADA, OK

By Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Jenna Waddell is a flight nurse, flying out of Air Evac Lifeteam in Ada, Oklahoma. She has been a nurse for almost six years now and has been flying for a year and seven months. "I always wanted to work in the medical field, ever since I was a child. I truly believe it is a calling for me to serve others. Growing up, my dad, now a 100% disabled combat veteran Navy SEAL, would sometimes come home from deployment with an injury. I would help him in any way that I could. After a traumatic parachuting accident that almost amputated his right leg, I knew for sure that I was supposed to go into trauma and emergency medicine. I grew up taking care of others, so it is only natural for me to be a nurse. It's in my bones. No

pun intended," Jenna said with a smile.

"Being a flight nurse is the best job in the whole world," Jenna said. "I don't just have one favorite thing about my job but the ones that stand out are: 1. The amount of autonomy that I have in the air. I do not have to ask a physician for orders. It is me and my partner making critical life or death decisions. 2. We are held to a higher standard as clinicians with an enhanced scope of practice. The requirements, certifications and education needed are next level and we are expected to know our stuff. 3. I take care of patients in a helicopter."

Jenna got her first degree at Baylor University in Health and Human Science. "I initially was going to be a physical therapist.

During my senior year at Baylor, I was completing my clinical nurse in an inpatient setting for physical therapy school admission. During that rotation, I was working alongside other nurses. I watched as they worked tirelessly to provide the best care for their patients. I knew right then that was going to become a nurse. I applied last minute into UCO's Nursing program after graduation from Baylor. I went through the fast track nursing program at Oklahoma City University Kramer School of Nursing. I did not realize that nursing had so many specialties and opportunities. After doing more research about the profession, I never looked back," Jenna said.

To qualify for a flight nurse, more training is needed. "You must have 3-5 years of critical care

experience, have BLS, ACLS, PALS, PHTLS, PHNRP, an advanced certification such as TNCC and an advanced nursing certification to include either CFRN, CCRN, or CEN. After being accepted into the new role as a flight nurse, there is a six month orientation/training process," Jenna explained. "During those six months, you have to attend and pass three regional intensives which test you on your knowledge and skill set during any quizzes and stimulations. There are four flight nurses, four flight paramedics, and four pilots at each base," Jenna added.

Jenna's flight flies out of Ada, Oklahoma, working 24 hours on, 24 hours off each week. She works in the trauma bay at the hospital during her week off. "I

See WADDELL Page 5



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WADDELL

Continued from Page 4

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"Our service area is 75 nautical miles from the base in Ada, Oklahoma. However, we have found ourselves in many states across the Midwest and southeastern regions to include Kansas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas."

At the base, Air Evac Lifeteam 26 in Ada, there were seventy-four flights this past month, the most in the state of Oklahoma.

What are some of the qualities of a good flight nurse? "Compassion, hard-working, detail-oriented, empathetic, being a strong, patient advocate, an effective communicator, a leader but also a team player," Jenna said.

Asking Jenna if she had received any awards or recognitions, she replied, "I received honors for grades all

through undergrad and nursing school including Cum Laude, the honor society for nurses, President's List, Dean's List, a Base Recognition Award, etc. I volunteered at Habitat for Humanity and the Humane Society."

When Jenna is not working she enjoys spending her time, running, cycling, Body Pump and CrossFit, etc. Jenna likes to travel and spend time outdoors, whether it be hiking, boating, camping, kayaking and scuba surfing. She enjoys walking Bentley, her Australian Shepherd mix. Jenna also likes to read and play the violin.

Summing up Jenna's life in three words, she replied, "Faith, adventure and ambition."

For more information visit: www.lifeteam.net.



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Jenna Waddell, RN, BSN, CCRN, TCRN is a flight nurse for Air Evac Lifeteam in Ada, Oklahoma. They average fifty to seventy flights a month.

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easiest decision of my life. We came home Father's Day weekend.

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COVID-19 Cases		577,312
New Cases		2,627
New Cases 7 day Average		2,352
Active Cases		19,639
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths		9,496
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**		Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
		Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)		40 (9)
Region 2 (NE)		116 (29)
Region 3 (SW)		165 (36)
Region 4 (EC)		85 (24)
Region 5 (SE)		69 (10)
Region 6 (Central)		114 (35)
Region 7 (Tulsa)		407 (114)
Region 8 (OKC)		409 (122)
Total		1,405* (379)
Other Types of Facilities		
Focus Facilities		72 (29)
Rehabilitation Facilities		2 (0)
Tribal Facilities		49 (8)
Other Facilities Total		123 (37)

*Includes 30 hospitalizations in pediatric beds.

**Focus, Rehabilitation and Tribal Facilities numbers are not assigned to a specific region as their patient populations reside across the state. Information provided through survey of Oklahoma hospitals as reported to HHS as of the time of this report. Response rate affects data. Facilities may update previously reported information as necessary.

Data Source: Acute Disease Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health. *As of 2021-09-10 at 7:00 a.m.

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Continued from Page 10

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American Nurses Association Supports the Biden Administration's COVID-19 Action Plan, "Path out of the Pandemic"

The American Nurses Association (ANA), representing the interests of the nation's 4.3 million registered nurses, supports the actions included in President Joe Biden's multi-pronged COVID-19 Action Plan, "Path out of the Pandemic" released yesterday in particular the new requirements and incentives to increase the vaccination rate and protect those who have been vaccinated.

"Nurses working in all roles and care settings are exhausted and frustrated about the impact of the 4th wave of COVID-19 with the burden of new cases, increased hospitalizations and many deaths that could have been prevented by a greater acceptance of vaccines," said ANA President Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN. "ANA supports the Biden Administration plan to use every lever to increase the number of people vaccinated as the only way to get out of this crisis."



In July, ANA called upon all health care workers to be vaccinated. This next step the Administration is taking, encouraging employers to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations aligns with our longstanding position on immunizations, which emphasizes that effective protection of the public health mandates that all individuals receive immunizations against vaccine-preventable diseases. ANA fully supports the President's efforts.

Last week, ANA urged the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services (HHS) to declare the current and unsustainable nurse staffing shortage facing our country a national crisis. An increasing body of evidence shows appropriate nurse staffing contributes to improved patient outcomes. ANA continues to call for the Administration to acknowledge

and take concrete action to address the current crisis-level nurse staffing shortage that puts nurses' ability to care for patients in jeopardy. The pandemic has exacerbated underlying, chronic nursing workforce challenges that have persisted for decades. Our nation must have a robust nursing workforce at peak health and wellness to meet the needs of our nation today and in the future. Stressful work environments that often require nurses to care for too many patients coupled with mandatory overtime have contributed to burnout among many nurses even before the pandemic.

"ANA applauds the Biden Administration for using its full authority to increase our nation's COVID-19 vaccination rate and put the pandemic behind us," said Dr. Grant. "In addition, we look forward to working with them to address the underlying systemic problems of nurse staffing shortages that with the pandemic have created a national crisis for the nation's nursing workforce."

Nursing Students Impacted by Natural Disasters Need Help Now



As hurricane Ida ravaged several states in the south, and wildfires spread devastation in western states, future nurses need your help now!

The Foundation of the NSNA Disaster Relief Fund supports nursing students and schools of nursing impacted by catastrophic disasters. The funding supports textbooks, uniforms, and nursing education tools (such as tablets, computers and stethoscopes) lost during disasters. Funds also assist schools of nursing in replacing library books, computers, or any other vital equipment necessary to educate nursing students.

Grants are made to nursing schools upon request for distribution to students documenting financial need. Funding does not support tuition. However, the FNSNA's scholarship program does provide for tuition support.

When tragedy strikes, nurses jump into action to assist those in need. These selfless acts of courage and care are the reason nurses are the most trusted profession. With a

severe shortage of nurses nationally, we must jump into action to ensure that nursing students can graduate on time and enter the workforce where they are sorely needed. We can't let the consequences of disasters delay their nursing education and graduation.

Many nursing students across the country are certified American Red Cross Disaster volunteers and they are providing basic healthcare services in shelters.

The Foundation of the NSNA's first responsibility is for the needs of nursing students, our future nurses. Your tax-deductible donation, no matter how big or small, supports nursing students eager to enter the field of nursing.

To donate visit:
www.forevernursing.org.



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Oklahoma Infant Mortality Rate Drops 18 Percent

September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month



OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health

The Oklahoma State Department of Health today announced the state's infant mortality rate (IMR) has decreased by more than 18 percent since beginning a statewide infant mortality reduction program in 2007. The IMR was 8.2 in 2005-2007, dropping to 6.7 in 2018-2020.

"Approximately 50 more babies a year in Oklahoma are able to spend their first birthday with their families!" said Joyce Marshall, director of maternal and child health service. "Oklahoma continues to take positive steps to reduce infant deaths through the work of many dedicated partners and individuals."

This accomplishment is the result of multiple programs like Preparing for a Lifetime: It's Everyone's Responsibility, a statewide initiative celebrating its 12th anniversary in September – which is also Infant Mortality Awareness Month. The initiative includes numerous strategies designed to improve birth outcomes and reduce disparities for Oklahoma's mothers and babies. Key messages include:

- Being healthy before, during and between pregnancies greatly improves the chances of having a healthy pregnancy and baby.
- Encouraging women of reproductive age to take a multivitamin daily containing 400 mcg of folic acid to help prevent birth defects – the #1 cause of infant death in Oklahoma.
- Having a full-term pregnancy and breastfeeding offers a baby the best start in life.

- Recognizing the signs and getting help for maternal mood disorders, which includes postpartum depression (PPD), can improve health for both mother and baby.

- Placing baby on his/her back to sleep alone in a safe crib and avoiding exposure to secondhand smoke decreases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

- Individuals who want to quit smoking can call the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free services.

- Knowing how to prevent leading causes of injury, such as correctly installing infant car seats, helps keep baby safe and secure.

- Learning what to do if the baby will not stop crying may help prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

"As we continue to improve in critical areas such as breastfeeding, smoking, infant safe sleep practices and prenatal care, we are encouraged by the reduction in infant mortality," Marshall said. "We acknowledge that there is still work to be done to achieve equity and the national Healthy People 2030 objective of 5.0, but thrilled that more of our babies are being saved."

Improvements in priorities, including significant decreases in the rate of teen births and smoking rates among pregnant women have also contributed to fewer infant deaths.

To learn more about Preparing for a Lifetime: It's Everyone's Responsibility, please visit www.io.health.ok.gov.

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PREPARE TO BE SURPRISED.

Meet the Maddox family. Their thirteen-year-old daughter, SaNiyah, has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair. SaNiyah's entire life – her happiness, her health, her every need – all depends on her family and help from the team at Special Care. But they also have two adorable young sons, demanding jobs and – on top of everything else – they foster an infant who needed a home, too. It's more than most of us could handle.

But here's the big surprise. The Maddoxes not only receive help from United Way agencies, they find room in a budget stretched to its limit and they give to the United Way. **Can you?**

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