



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

CARE CONNECTION Pediatric

A PUBLICATION FOR PEDIATRIC CLIENTS AND FAMILIES OF BAYADA HOME HEALTH CARE



BAYADA Nurse Mat Gunkel, RN

Share Your Personal Milestones as BAYADA Prepares to Achieve One of Ours: Our One Millionth Client

At BAYADA, we help seniors live at home with independence and dignity. We help parents sleep better at night knowing their child is being cared for by their BAYADA Nurse. We aim to make it possible for medically-fragile children to go to school and for grandparents to attend their grandchild's recital. We work diligently to keep families together at home for the holidays, and help make it possible

for elderly couples to celebrate another anniversary in the comfort of home. Every day, we focus on bringing *The BAYADA Way* to life by helping people like your child live their lives to the fullest.

health care services—from life-changing accomplishments to simple, everyday victories. We celebrate them, together. Your stories may be used in a variety of internal and external communications this summer, including on our website and social media channels, in newsletters, media outreach, care studies, or as testimonials in our BAYADA brochures and advertisements, as we shine the spotlight on special milestones achieved by clients like your child.

Our clients celebrated a decannulation, going to the prom, winning a local election, and meeting their favorite football players. We want to hear about your milestones!

On the heels of achieving several important BAYADA milestones—transitioning to a nonprofit and achieving the Glassdoor Best Places to Work designation for the second consecutive year—we are preparing to celebrate another upcoming milestone in our 44-year history. We anticipate helping our one millionth client early this summer and **invite you to share with us your own personal milestones.** Delivering your care is our highest priority, and acknowledging and celebrating your accomplishments is our greatest joy.

Do you have a story about your child's care and successes that you'd like to share?

Please email CAREConnection@bayada.com if you'd like to participate in our storytelling efforts and send us photos or videos of your special moments. Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your stories and help other potential clients in the process. ■

That's why we are always looking for your personal stories about your home

Mom Jeanna and dad Emanuel celebrated their daughter Alexa's decannulation.



TRACH TUBE REMOVED

Logan attended his junior high school formal, thanks to his BAYADA Nurse Beth Fox.



GOING TO PROM

Christian had his dreams come true when he met players from his favorite football team, the New England Patriots.



MEETING FAVE TEAM

Kirk ran for and won a seat on the local school board.



WINNING AN ELECTION

Want to receive a digital version of the CARE Connection Newsletter? Email us at CAREConnection@bayada.com. Please indicate if you would prefer to receive our newsletter for pediatric or adult clients.

Champions Among Us | Advocacy From Home

BAYADA client doesn't let mobility challenges stop her from helping others

BAYADA client **Dimpal Patel** has a passion for Harry Potter novels and the *Twilight* series, and she expresses her creativity through scrapbooking, crafting, and creating Christmas ornaments, to name a few.

However, the 24-year-old, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of North Carolina (UNC) Charlotte, needed another outlet to harness her energy and her desire to help others. Hearts for Home Care, BAYADA's grassroots legislative advocacy program, seemed to be the perfect fit.

A debilitating diagnosis never stood in her way

Dimpal was born with muscular dystrophy, a condition that significantly limits her mobility. She uses a wheelchair and is dependent upon a tracheostomy tube and ventilator to breathe. Thanks to the unwavering support of her parents and the BAYADA nurses who have become her best friends, Dimpal has been able to embrace her independence and live her life as fully as possible.

Dimpal's nurses entered her life in 2009 when she had the tracheostomy tube inserted. Since then, they have been a steady and welcome presence, going with her to classes at South Point High School in Belmont, NC and being there 24/7 during the four days a week that she lived on UNC Charlotte's campus.



Hearts for Home Care

When Dimpal wanted to do more with her spare time after college graduation, her nurses reached out to BAYADA's Gastonia Adult Nursing Office Director **Megan O'Shields** for suggestions.

"Dimpal likes to be involved in activities and meeting goals she sets for herself," said Megan. "So we thought, why not get her involved in advocacy!"

Fighting for increased Medicaid rates

Dimpal receives 106 hours of nursing care a week funded through the NC Medicaid program. "It can be difficult to recruit quality nurses to care for clients with complex medical needs when hospitals and other facilities pay more," said Megan. "Client advocates like Dimpal are very influential in educating legislators about the importance of increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rate so that home care agencies can competitively pay their nurses what they deserve."

Dimpal always wanted to get more involved in advocacy, but worried that her disabilities would limit her involvement. "Without home care, my parents would have had to stay home from work to take care of me, and that would have created

a financial hardship for my family," she said. "I think it's so important that our state and federal decision makers hear our voice and understand how important home care is in our communities."

BAYADA Government Affairs Client and Family Advocacy Manager **Tara Montague** encouraged Dimpal to submit a short opinion piece to her local newspaper, the *Gaston Gazette*. Dimpal shared how her nurses enabled her to go to college, as well as the importance of Medicaid for her and so many others who rely on home care.

Instead of simply publishing the opinion piece, the newspaper sent a reporter to Dimpal's home to get a first-hand look at the impact home care has on her life. The story ended up on the front page! Read the *Gaston Gazette* story by visiting bit.ly/GastonDimpal.

Clients and their loved ones can advocate from home

BAYADA helps those with limited mobility to live a full life and remain at home. That's why the Hearts for Home Care team developed a robust menu of advocacy activities—so that anyone who wants to get involved in advocacy can! Reaching out to legislators via traditional or social media, calling into a town hall, or sending a newspaper clipping or an email are just a few of the many ways that clients and their family members can advocate from their own homes.

"I knew that advocacy would be a wonderful way for Dimpal to get engaged in something meaningful," said Megan. "Now we are planning transportation so that she can attend Legislative Day in Raleigh in May and speak during an advocacy training for BAYADA employees. She is truly a wonderful advocate for herself and for the many North Carolinians who rely on home care to remain with their families!"

Register for Hearts for Home Care

It takes less than five minutes to register to become a "Heart for Home Care" advocate. Consider doing so at heartshomecare.com. You'll receive email updates about relevant issues and opportunities to get involved. ■



Dimpal is pictured with her nurses, from left to right, RN Amy Owens, LPN Chastity Bridges, and LPN Toni Birmingham

Introducing the Skilled Nursing Unit

Our Gold Standard Commitment to You

In January, Practice President **Melinda Phillips** took the leadership reins of BAYADA's new Skilled Nursing Unit. This new BAYADA support structure brings the adult nursing and pediatric specialty leadership teams together to coordinate goal-setting and strategic planning, while maintaining our commitment to age and diagnosis-specific clinical care.

That's why we set a goal for at least 10 new nurses hired in every adult and pediatric skilled nursing office every quarter of 2019.

The vision of the Skilled Nursing Unit is to build a future where our nurses are more empowered with new technologies to self-schedule and work together as care teams to cover shifts, provide reliable and uninterrupted care, and make sure your needs are met.

A team-based approach to care

"In the client experience satisfaction survey, you have told us time and again that staffing continues to be a major challenge," shared Melinda, who began her 25-year career with BAYADA as a client services manager and went on to work with clients of all ages and diagnoses as a director, division director, regional director, chief people officer, and pediatric practice president. "I want you to know that we hear you! Your very real concerns are the driving force behind our Skilled Nursing Unit vision,



BAYADA Skilled Nursing Unit Practice President Melinda Phillips (right) is pictured with Dimpal, LPN Chastity Bridges (left), and Client Services Manager Kenya Tuft (center). Read more about Dimpal on page 2.

where nurses of all specialties are more empowered to work as a team to ensure that shifts are covered, transitions are smooth, and your child's needs are met. It's a hands-in approach led by the nurses on each client's care team, because they know that client best."

"But to make the Skilled Nursing Unit vision a reality, we need to tackle our staffing challenges, and we have to start now," said Melinda. "That's why we set a goal for at least 10 new nurses hired in every adult and pediatric skilled nursing office every quarter of 2019."

Melinda wants you to know that this goal is about much more than mere numbers. It's about providing you and your loved ones with the best nurses and reliable coverage so that your child can get the care they need, when they need it most. Because when a life hangs in the balance, care can't wait.

A relentless focus on our clients

BAYADA client Dimpal Patel, 24, who has muscular dystrophy, knows all too well the importance of getting the care she needs, when she needs it. During a heartfelt conversation with Melinda, who visited Dimpal recently at her home, she explained what can happen if there are no nurses available to care for her.

"Home care nurses allow Dimpal's parents to go to work," said Melinda. "When the nurses are not there to cover a shift, her parents must choose between the financial hardship of lost pay or bringing Dimpal to work with them, which is certainly not where a 24-year-old wants to be."

Unfortunately, Dimpal's story is not unique, as clients across the country experience a wide range of challenges when a nurse is not available to cover a shift. For Melinda and her team, that is simply unacceptable. That's why she and the Skilled Nursing Unit leadership team are so committed to ensuring reliability and improving client satisfaction.

We want to hear from you

"Our clients have an opportunity to shape our strategic vision by sharing honest feedback on their client experience survey," shared Melinda, who reads every client's comments. "In addition



Watch a video that highlights this team approach by visiting bit.ly/BAYADATeam

to the survey, I encourage you to send me your ideas, suggestions, recognition of your clinicians, and opportunities for improvement. I will make an effort to respond to each and every one of you."

Send your feedback to Melinda via email at CAREConnection@bayada.com. ■



BAYADA Hands-In

Meet the Skilled Nursing Unit Leadership Team



Melinda Phillips
Practice President



Cris Toscano
Chief Operating Officer
PA Pediatrics Regional Director



Ali Genthner
Adult Nursing Regional Director
GA, FL, NC, SC



Steve Gyory
Adult Nursing Regional Director
DE, IN, PA



Susan Ingalls
Pediatrics Regional Director
DE, MA, NH, NJ, RI, VT



Robin McCarson
Pediatrics Regional Director
AZ, GA, NC, TX



Wes Trice
Adult Nursing Regional Director
MN, MO, NJ, NY



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

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BAYADA specialty practices include Home Health Care, Pediatrics, Hospice, and Habilitation. Services may vary by location.
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Support for Siblings of Children with Special Needs

By Shelby Myers, BAYADA Community Liaison

My son Clay was six when he became ill. At the time, my daughter was 11, and my baby was 9 months old. Suddenly, our world changed dramatically. For our 9-month-old son and our newborn twins to follow, this was the only life they knew. For our oldest, I'm certain she felt shock and disorientation. It's hard enough to be an adolescent; now she was coming of age with nurses in our home 16 hours a day.

Parents of children with special needs do what they have to do. It's not easy. Siblings understand that too, but they can feel sad when they are inadvertently left out.

What does the research say?

Research has shown positive impacts on the resilience of children with a sibling who requires special care. These children tend to exhibit greater independence, maturity, patience, and kindness than their peers. However, they also have feelings of loneliness, responsibility, fear, jealousy, guilt, and resentment. They perceive a decrease in family activities and feel pushed to the background. For younger children, this may

result in irritable and withdrawn behavior. Older children may act out.

How parents can help

- 1. Communicate.** Children have a limited ability to interpret the things they see and hear, and their feelings can be masked by a desire to protect their parents from additional burden. Be proactive and explain what's going on with their sibling's health care. Ask your children how they're feeling. Ask if they have any questions. Let them know their feelings are okay and normal. Children need to hear that their parents love them and are there for them.
- 2. Make quality time.** Find a way to have regularly scheduled time together, even if it's a phone call. When another caregiver can relieve you, play outside or go somewhere together to make one child your center of focus. This can reassure children, decrease separation anxiety, and create a feeling of belonging.
- 3. Choose a buddy.** Identify an adult you can trust to talk to each sibling and create a safe space for that child to walk away from what's happening at home. Tap this



Family vacation at the Jersey Shore. Front: Ashton, Clay, and Corrine. Back: Ashley, Tim, Gabriella, and Shelby.

person to plan special one-on-one time with your child. This can be a wonderful support system for you, and for your child who may not want to discuss sensitive issues with you.

- 4. Find a therapist.** Children can benefit from having an objective professional to talk to, and the cost may be covered by a behavioral health insurance benefit or Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- 5. Join a support group.** Children's hospitals usually have local support groups and other programs like art therapy. The Sibling Support Project is a nationwide program that connects peers, offers resources and online groups, and can help you find—or start—a local support group they call Sibshops. To learn more, visit www.siblingsupport.org.