



VNA OF
CAPE COD

The Visitor

MEMBER CAPE COD HEALTHCARE

WINTER 2026



**THIS YEAR WE
CELEBRATE 110
YEARS OF
SERVICE TO OUR
COMMUNITY!**

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GUEST POST

A Lookback Throughout the Years - Meg Payne, Director of Public Health & Provider Relations

Founded in 1915 with the support of the Woods Hole Women's Club and the American Red Cross, the Falmouth Nursing Association (FNA) marked the beginning of organized public health services in Falmouth. Early efforts focused on children's health, with school screenings, dental care, vaccinations, and clinics housed in a small Main Street bungalow that also served as the nurse's residence. By the 1920s, FNA became a charitable corporation and a national model for public health, responding to infectious disease outbreaks and expanding preventive care.

During the Great Depression, nurses took on critical social welfare roles, supporting families through nutrition programs and education. Over time, new initiatives emerged, including mothers' classes, immunization clinics, physical therapy services, and participation in polio vaccine distribution.

The passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1966 sparked significant growth. Services expanded to include seniors, hospital-to-home transitions, school health programs, and multidisciplinary home care. By the 1980s, the organization-renamed the Visiting Nurse Association of Upper Cape Cod- served multiple towns, employed more than 100 staff, embraced new technologies, and affiliated with the Falmouth Hospital Foundation.

Since 1989, the VNA has continued to evolve, expanding clinical programs, hospice and palliative care, and public health. Through public health emergencies, including COVID-19, the VNA has remained rooted in its mission: delivering compassionate, high-quality care where people live.



The Falmouth Nursing Association Staff — 1966
Miss Gail B. Barrett, Mrs. Howard L. Sanders, Mrs. Robert L. Kendall, Supervisor,
Mrs. E. Joel Peterson, and Mrs. Charles H. Shepard.
(Miss Barrett is replacing Mrs. Peterson who has resigned;
Mrs. Charles M. Pollock, Jr. was not present when photograph was made.)

**Right-Photo: Child Welfare Work August 1919*

HOMECARE

Winter Safety at Home: Home Care Tips for Cape Cod

Winter on Cape Cod brings snow, ice, and occasional power outages that can increase the risk of falls and medical emergencies- especially for those receiving care at home. Our home health team encourages simple steps to help you stay safe and independent throughout the season.

- Limit trips outside during storms or icy conditions when possible, and consider delivery services, telehealth, or rescheduling non-urgent appointments.
- Keep steps, ramps, and walkways shoveled and treated with sand or ice melt, use handrails, and take slow, careful steps.
- Wear sturdy, non-skid footwear, check cane or walker tips, and use ice grips when appropriate.
- Inside the home, reduce fall risks by removing clutter and loose rugs, improving lighting, and adding grab bars and non-slip mats in bathrooms.

Winter is a good time to review your emergency plan. Make sure your home is safely heated, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working, and you have basic supplies on hand- flashlights, batteries, blankets, water, non-perishable food, and a charged phone or backup battery. If you rely on electricity-dependent medical equipment, work with your care team to plan for outages.

Talk with your VNA of Cape Cod nurse or therapist about your personal fall risk and winter emergency plan. You can also reference the Emergency Plan in your home care folder for additional guidance.

HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Hospice Volunteers: Bringing Comfort in Winter

Winter on Cape Cod is a quieter, more peaceful season- and for those receiving hospice care, it can also be a time when connection matters most. Our hospice volunteers bring warmth and comfort through simple but meaningful acts: companionship, a listening ear, empathy, and compassion.

Hospice volunteers form special relationships with patients and their families. They may help facilitate reminiscence, record life stories, offer respite for caregivers, or simply sit and share quiet moments together. In doing so, they help ease loneliness and provide a steady, reassuring presence during a deeply personal time.

Through their kindness and dedication, hospice volunteers help ensure that no one feels alone, even in the stillness of winter on Cape Cod.

We hope you enjoyed the Winter 2026 issues of The Visitor. For questions and inquiries, please reach out to (508)-957-7737

PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Holiday Season Is Also Flu Season

As we gather with family and friends, it's important to remember that germs spread easily this time of year. In fact, up to 80% of infections are transmitted by hands. Practicing good hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.

Handwashing Tips

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds
- Be sure to clean thumbs, fingertips, the backs of hands, and between fingers
- Dry hands with a clean towel
- Use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available

Let's all do our part to keep germs at bay this season- clean hands truly save lives.

Additional Ways to Prevent Illness This Holiday Season

- Stay up to date with recommended vaccinations
- Stay home when you're feeling sick
- Consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor spaces
- Cover coughs and sneezes