Palliative care has power to transform lives

Northwest Kidney Centers’ history of innovation and emphasis on patient quality of life continues with our Renal Supportive Care program, the nation’s first palliative care program operated by a dialysis provider. The team is composed of nephrologist Dr. Daniel Lam, social worker Claire Nassutti and nurse Megan Nolan. Team members meet patients where they are – physically, emotionally and geographically.

The interdisciplinary team shares responsibilities, with team members bringing their professional expertise to help patients cope with anything from pain and depression to insomnia and mobility issues. By helping to manage symptoms that interfere with quality of life, the team treats the whole person in partnership with the dialysis care team.

“This type of care requires working closely with patients to help them find a balance among independence, comfort and longevity,” Claire said. The team meets weekly to create a tailored plan for each patient. In addition to their specialties, team members are skilled in discussions about difficult health care decision-making, conversations about goals of care, and advance care planning for the end of life.

The palliative care team and staff at our Elliott Bay clinic helped Scott Fincke reconnect with his passions for music and painting. Today Scott exhibits his artwork with a growing social media following. He meets regularly with the team including Claire Nassutti (left) and Megan Nolan.
Early risers give big at Breakfast of Hope

Donors and sponsors contributed more than $346,000 for charity care, nutrition education and fitness services at the 16th annual Breakfast of Hope. More than 600 people attended the event on May 10. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Mary Lewis, long-time clinical educator, receives distinguished service award

Mary Lewis, clinical director of staff education at Northwest Kidney Centers, has received the organization’s highest honor, the Clyde Shields Distinguished Service Award, for significant contributions to the welfare of kidney patients.

Since the start of her career at Northwest Kidney Centers in 1976, Mary has fostered care for thousands of dialysis patients by training their caregivers. She directs Northwest Kidney Centers Dialysis Academy, which trains nurses and technicians in the principles of kidney care. Her programs have been adopted by the state of Washington as the industry standard.

She also developed partnerships with local schools of nursing and Medic One, ensuring that health care providers in the broader community are attuned to the particular needs of people on dialysis.

“Mary is dedicated to the nephrology community and advancing knowledge and science for all. She demonstrates the courage that Clyde Shields exhibited as the first patient—trying new ideas and being a pioneer,” said Joyce F. Jackson, president and CEO of Northwest Kidney Centers.

The legacy of Clyde Shields

Clyde Shields was the world’s first long-term survivor of kidney failure. He began dialysis in 1960 at the University of Washington, with Dr. Belding Scribner’s shunt implanted in his arm. The shunt made it possible to access the bloodstream repeatedly, and it changed kidney failure from a death sentence to a manageable health condition.

Medical knowledge leapt forward thanks to Mr. Shields’ willingness to be a research subject. Dialysis gave him 11 more years of life.
Remote interpreter services for 100 languages enable patients and care givers to have more meaningful conversations.

Fighting diabetes with education

Our commitment to community health education includes financial support for the Diabetes Self-Management Program taught by African Americans Reach and Teach Ministry (AARTH). In the 6-week class, trained peer educators teach people diagnosed with diabetes how to control their condition so they can avoid kidney disease and dialysis.

What did you learn that surprised you?

That label reading and menu planning help you make healthier choices about what to eat.
— Janet Davis

Learning how important exercise is in avoiding diabetes.
— Israel Francois

Have you made lifestyle changes since taking the class?

I’ve started doing 30 minutes a day on my elliptical machine. Still working on making healthier food choices. I did switch from drinking soda pop to soda water.
— Israel Francois

Would you recommend the class to others?

Definitely. The class covers vital information in a comfortable setting, a relaxed atmosphere where people are more open and sharing. We hear health advice throughout our lives but brush it off. I’m happy to apply this knowledge.
— Garnell Davis

I recommend it to everyone, especially African Americans. You get a lot of great information, and it was good to hear about it from someone I can relate to, someone outside of a doctor’s office.
— Israel Francois

For more information or to enroll in the Diabetes Self-Management Program, contact:

Sanura Dean
sanurad.aarth@gmail.com
206-850-2070

Workshops are held at churches, community centers, senior centers, clinics and housing complexes across King County.
Northwest Kidney Centers recently unveiled plans to build a Burien campus to open in 2019. The site will include a community dialysis clinic and an office pavilion to house staff currently spread out across King County. A new state-of-the-art logistics center will also be on the campus.

New Burien campus planned for 2019 opening

Northwest Kidney Centers will build a campus on the border of Burien and SeaTac that will open in 2019. It will include a community dialysis clinic, a logistics center and an office pavilion where 150 staff members will work.

Staff and patients from our West Seattle dialysis clinic will move to the new clinic at 12901 20th Ave. S., SeaTac. The 17,800-square-foot, 20-station clinic will share space with home training, community education and research areas.

The 15,800-square-foot logistics center will replace the current distribution center on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. It will include a warehouse and biomedical technical services lab. The warehouse will feature a state-of-the-art racking system and an electronic receiving station for scanning and tracking supplies as well as safety features like bumpers and guards to protect staff, equipment and supplies.

The 29,400-square-foot office pavilion will bring under one roof staff members who now work at facilities around the region, so we look forward to less travel, more efficiency and easier collaborations. Meanwhile, we’ll free up space that can be converted for expansion of dialysis services.

The campus is adjacent to North SeaTac Park so staff members and visitors will have calming outdoor views. Access is from S. 128th St. or 20th Ave. S.

Our five-year strategic plan includes the goals to Grow Bigger and Care Better. Adding new clinics helps us meet those goals. Demand for our services has grown 15 percent over the past three years, and the rate is even faster in south King County, where many of our new treatment stations will be.

In 2017 we provided a total of 268,000 dialysis treatments. With the addition of the new sites, Northwest Kidney Centers will increase its treatment capacity by 12 percent.

When this phase of expansion is completed, Northwest Kidney Centers will operate 19 dialysis clinics around Puget Sound.
Introducing Liz McNamara, new chief nurse

In June Liz McNamara joined Northwest Kidney Centers as vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer.

Her most recent position was assistant administrator for patient care services at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. In addition to her patient care experience, Liz has a strong background in education and research. She has been a nurse educator and completed her master’s degree in nursing at the University of Washington.

“Liz has a passion for serving vulnerable people living with the challenges of chronic illness, deep experience in infection control and has worked closely on a day-to-day basis with nephrologists,” said Joyce F. Jackson, president and CEO.

Liz succeeds Connie Anderson, who retired after 44 years with Northwest Kidney Centers. Connie will continue to consult on national quality collaborations and special projects.