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NVNA and Hospice opens fundraising campaign

By Sue Scheible
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Barbara P. Bush, granddaughter of the late First Lady Barbara Bush, accepts the Amy Sylvester Award posthumously for her grandmother from the NVNA and Hospice of Norwell.

Rebounding from the pandemic, the NVNA and Hospice has established a new award to honor people who have made an impact on national and local health care.

NORWELL — At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Massachusetts, the NVNA and Hospice was facing a 40 percent drop in revenue as its caseload fell — and there was a serious shortage of personal protective equipment for its caregivers — with no firm idea of when things would turn around. But four months later, the visiting nurse agency has returned to

performance levels as seen before the coronavirus arrived and has rebuilt its personal protective equipment stockpiles.

“Our recovery is ahead of forecast,” Renee McInnes, CEO and executive director of the agency serving 27 communities, said.

Referrals of patients from medical providers including hospitals, doctors and surgeons rebounded “with a bang,” she said. In July, people started to again feel comfortable having elective surgeries and other medical care that had been postponed; clients also chose home care when possible over nursing home care due to concerns about safety and a ban on visitors in nursing homes.

As part of its 100th anniversary in 2020, the NVNA and Hospice has launched the Grace Campaign to raise \$4.5 million by 2021. Some \$2.8 million has already been raised. The money will help the organization build on the mission of the Pat Roche Hospice Home and the agency’s Palliative Care Division.

To honor 100 years of service, the agency has also created the Amy Sylvester Award for Healthcare Excellence. Named after its founder, a Norwell wife and mother, the award is presented to people who have made an impact on national and local health care.

Two Sylvester awards were presented this year, the award’s first.

The late First Lady Barbara Bush, who spoke out strongly in support of end of life care, received the award posthumously. Barbara Bush died in April of 2018 at age 92 of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure.



Renee McInnes, CEO, center rear, and other members of the NVNA and Hospice gather with Barbara P. Bush and Mike O'Reilly, the winners of the first Amy Sylvester Awards inside the Pat Roche Hospice Home in Hingham.

In her final days, she announced through a family spokesman that she was discontinuing medical care and would be receiving “comfort care,” or palliative and hospice care. She passed peacefully at home surrounded by family. Her end-of-life decision stirred discussion and raised awareness of personal choice to end medical treatments and focus on quality of life.

Her granddaughter, Barbara P. Bush, CEO and co-founder of GlobalHealth Corps, accepted the award in her grandmother’s honor on Aug. 13 at the Pat Roche Hospice Home in Norwell.



Mike O'Reilly, of Marshfield, COO at Fidelity Digital Asset, was presented with an Amy Sylvester Award by the NVNA and Hospice of Norwell.

The second award went to Michael O’Reilly, COO at Fidelity Digital Assets, of Marshfield. O’Reilly is the former board chairman of the NVNA and Hospice Charitable Fund and one of its founding members. He served as the first fundraising chairman and the community has since donated over \$8 million to the agency’s patient care programs.

“In launching the Grace Campaign, we are looking toward our next century of care,” McInnes said. “Philanthropy is a vital part of our work and the generosity of the community supporting our mission is inspiring.”

The number of patients in the Pat Roche Hospice Home has increased by as much as 50 percent over 2019.

Neither the hospice home nor palliative care services are fully reimbursed by medical insurance, making them expensive to run. They will benefit greatly from the fundraising campaign, McInnes said.