

# Centennial

1912 – 2012

# Sentiments



## “Ready to Answer Immediate Need”

*On March 29, 1929, the Sunday Times reported, “Ready to answer immediate need in case of disaster or epidemic, twenty-two nurses, the majority of whom are on the staff of the Visiting Nurses Association, are organized as one division of the reserve of the army and navy nursing corp.*

Emergency preparedness is at the heart of Visiting Nurse Association Health Group’s commitment to community. VNA responded during the war years: counseling at draft boards, providing war disaster planning and creating a medical-dental program for veterans. VNA staff taught home nursing for the Red Cross and made daily visits to the day nurseries for children of mothers employed in defense work. And their service went beyond their primary neighborhoods as captured in the newspaper article from the time that stated, “...There are two blue stars in the [VNA service] flag for the two members of the Visiting Nurses’ staff who have joined the armed forces and who are now in the service of the military instead of this community.”

VNA nurses were among those that first aided victims of the Morro Castle shipwreck in 1934 when a nor’easter drove the disabled vessel close to shore near Asbury Park. During the Nor’easter of ’92 VNA played a key role staffing shelters throughout the service area



for thousands of coastal residents who had been evacuated. VNA were first responders during the Edison explosion of 1994 and the Manville flooding in 1999. On September 11, VNA played a comprehensive role: comforting the bereaved, meeting the traumatically affected at the Bayshore ferries, dressing the wounds of burn victims, providing support to grieving widows coping with the birth of a new child.

Since then, VNA Health Group has been actively involved and participates in local and statewide natural disaster drills. When Hurricane Katrina struck in 2007, VNA staff were dispatched to the Gulf Coast to assist our more distant neighbors in need.

Most recently VNA responded during Hurricane Irene, beginning preparations three days before it touched the New Jersey coastline. Nurses, therapists and home health aides reached out to more than 3,000 patients at home, established emergency



transport, and prioritized emergency rescue plans for vulnerable patients. VNA staff ministered to hundreds of individuals evacuated to shelters from Ocean to Bergen county. Many were elderly, disabled or had special needs. As the numbers grew, shelters required additional bedding and medical supplies. VNA staff made multiple trips to deliver cots and diabetic supplies. At the request of VNA, a local pharmacy opened its doors to provide additional supplies.

Following the storm, a VNA nurse found that many of her patients were still housed in at temporary shelters. She collected their medication and drove to the shelter to provide their care. As she arrived, one of her patients smiled and said, “I knew you would come.”

For 100 years, without question or hesitation, Visiting Nurse Association Health Group has remained steadfast in its commitment to respond to our community in need.