

Alert Home Health Aide Rescues Critically Ill Palatine Bridge Woman

*Home care staff provide vital supports for the elderly, as well as
“eyes and ears” for emergency situations*

(October 26, Albany, NY) Joanne Hogan, a home health aide from Capital Region-based Visiting Nurses Home Care, is being celebrated by her agency and peers after she obtained lifesaving emergency medical care for an elderly woman at a Palatine Bridge apartment complex. According to EMTs at the scene, Joanne’s quick action undoubtedly saved the woman’s life. Her story exemplifies the compassionate, vital, and sometimes even heroic services of home care staff who are recognized during National Home Care Month in November.

A few weeks ago, Joanne, who has worked with Visiting Nurses Home Care for 18 years, was in the apartment building to see a patient when she noticed a pile of mail and newspapers outside the door of her client’s neighbor. Her patient told Joanne she had not seen her neighbor in several days. Because the building is home to many elderly residents, Joanne was concerned and took immediate action.

Joanne had someone let her in, and found the neighbor lying on the floor, unconscious. She called 911 and comforted the neighbor while they waited for the ambulance. Joanne later learned that the neighbor is diabetic and her blood sugar level was an alarming 600, and she had a life-threatening bacterial infection: Sepsis. The EMTs told Joanne that the neighbor was literally hours from death. After spending a week in the hospital, the neighbor is now back home and doing fine.

Despite her heroic deed, Joanne refuses the title. She says, “I just did what anyone else would have done in that situation. It’s part of my job.” Her colleagues at Visiting Nurses Home Care are proud of her work. According to Chief Executive Officer Susan Larman, “I’m so proud and grateful to have Joanne on our staff. Her actions undoubtedly saved a life. And she’s not alone – every day our nurses, therapists and aides are not only providing critical care to patients, but quietly taking actions that go far beyond what their jobs require.”

During November, National Home Care Month, the home care community honors the millions of nurses, aides, therapists, and social workers who make a remarkable difference for the patients and families they serve. These workers provide critical medical, assistive and therapeutic care to patients. They also focus on environmental risks and social needs, making them a vital community asset whose help goes well beyond the care of individual patients.

Home care has many roles: an alternative to costlier nursing home care; a source of preventive care that keeps patients out of the hospital and post-acute care to help them recuperate after a hospital visit; and, in many cases, a lifesaving asset for vulnerable individuals at home.

For more information about National Home Care Month, contact Roger Noyes, Director of Communications, Home Care Association of New York State at rnoyes@hcanys.org.

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