



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

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VNA and Easter Seals Nebraska Merge Operations, Plan to Expand Services

OMAHA, Neb., August 30, 2012 – Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) and Easter Seals of Nebraska (ESN) will be merging operations, optimizing economies, efficiencies and synergies. This merger extends the reach of both VNA and ESN and creating services while expanding their capabilities and programs. The merger will take effect on September 1, 2012. This project is supported in part by the Nonprofit Restructuring Fund through the Omaha Community Foundation, a supplemental funding grant from United Way of the Midlands and funding from the National Easter Seals Society.

VNA and ESN complement one another in mission and history. Since their early beginnings, both have strived as community benefit organizations that exist to help the most vulnerable populations live better lives. Their shared goals include improving the lives of others regardless of the complexity of care or ability to pay and serving as a safety net for the community. Both organizations are 501(c)(3) and are governed by a board of directors composed of community volunteers who aim to help individuals live better lives, achieving peace of mind, quality of life and independence.

By combining the two organizations' operations, there is a shared vision as well as shared operations in administration, human resources, finance, accounting, information technology, purchasing, occupancy, marketing, public relations and fundraising. This sharing will result in saved overhead expenses for both organizations. Board governance will be shared, while developing working committees of the Board will ensure focus on each organization's unique features.

"This is a very exciting time for both organizations," said Jamie Summerfelt, president and CEO of VNA. "By combining efficiencies of the back office, we are able to expand services and programs throughout the state and utilize the organizations' shared strengths to provide more and better service to the community."

All ESN staff will begin preparations to move to VNA offices over the next couple months. Easter Seals of Nebraska will continue to be a corporate entity and will keep their 501(c)(3) as a subsidiary of VNA.

"Non-profits today, especially smaller affiliates, need to look at like organizations that may be able to come together and restructure, creating great opportunities for both organizations," retiring Easter Seals president and CEO Karen Carlson said. "In fact, National Easter Seals has never had this type of merger happen to one of its affiliates, and are quite excited to see the merger take place: it may create a model other affiliates can learn from and aspire to."

This merger adds service lines to the Easter Seals Nebraska affiliate, including medical rehabilitation, early intervention, physical therapy and speech and hearing therapy to the list of services currently provided. Easter Seals Nebraska is the forefront of providing rural services in Nebraska, and would be instrumental in VNA's vision to expand its services into rural Nebraska through Easter Seals offices already established in Lincoln, Geneva and Hastings.

Easter Seals of Nebraska Quick Facts:

- Mission: to provide exceptional services to help ensure all people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to live, learn, work and play.
- Easter Seals assists more than one million children and adults with disabilities and their families annually through a nationwide network of more than 450 service sites.
- Each center provides top-quality, family-focused and innovative services tailored to meet the specific needs of the particular community it serves.
- Service lines provided by Easter Seals Nebraska include job training and employment; camp and recreation for children, young adults, senior citizens and military; financial services including low interest rate and longer terms; and agriculture rehabilitation services to Nebraska farmers and ranchers.
- Easter Seals Nebraska employs 22 people, all of which will be offered a job at VNA.
- Easter Seals Nebraska has well established branding and marketing recognition and this merger would move the Nebraska affiliate from a \$1.9 million affiliate to a \$25+ million affiliate, and with the support of Nation Easter Seals Inc., could expand Nebraska programs through new grant requests.

Visiting Nurse Association Quick Facts:

- Mission: to deliver community based care that provides peace of mind, quality of life and independence.
- VNA has a staff of over 350 employees, including nurses, therapists, home health aides, companions, medical directors, dietitians, social workers, pharmacists, as well as clerical intake and medical records/IT professionals.
- Services vary from early intervention for children and families to home care and skilled nursing to palliative and hospice care for individuals and their families at the end of life.
- VNA is the *Face of Care* with the Vision to improve the life and health of people in our community.
- VNA has a corporate office of over 31,000 square feet and has the capacity to meet the needs of Easter Seals Nebraska corporate office staff.

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About the Visiting Nurse Association

For more than a century, VNA (Visiting Nurse Association) has led the way in the delivery of in-home and community health care services. Today, VNA is a team of more than 300 expert health professionals and caregivers dedicated to providing the highest quality in-home care to the residents of Omaha and Council Bluffs—regardless of their ability to pay—along with a wide range of services for and in the community. Backed by a tradition of nursing, VNA offers a complete line of home care services, including Companion Care, Skilled Home Care, IV Therapy, Home Health Technology, and Hospice and Palliative Care. To learn more about VNA's unique commitment to quality in-home care and the services we provide, please visit www.thevna cares.org or call 402-342-5566.