

Holiday Wishes

A healthy season filled with the comforts of happiness, home, and family — these are the holiday wishes we have for our Kirkhaven elders. I'm sure you share these wishes with us; after all, our Kirkhaven family of elders is your family too. Now we have an opportunity to fulfill these wishes by enhancing our elders' healthcare while minimizing their need to leave the comfort of their home.

Allow me to explain...

Kirkhaven has successfully made holistic, person-centered care paramount to everything we do. We've updated our full-care nursing facility so it's more like a home and less like a hospital. The nurse's station is no longer the hub of activity. Our elders live in households with a kitchen, living room, and lounge. Their schedule accommodates their individual wishes. Kirkhaven looks, feels, and smells like home.

To this end we're deeply grateful for your support. It's in that spirit we ask you to help us bring tidings of health and comfort to your family and ours this holiday season. Here is how we'd like to do it.

A Medical Reality

Despite our successes there is still one medical reality that remains a major source of angst for our elders and their family members: the stressful, anxiety-filled experience of going to the doctor's office, emergency room, or hospital.

Think about it. These places are a source of apprehension even for those of us who are relatively strong and healthy. Now imagine what it's like for some of our most frail and vulnerable elders.

When one of our elders has to go to the doctor's office or hospital it is a *big* deal. They need an aide or family member to accompany them, medical documents, and transportation. They have to sit in the waiting room fully exposed to germs from other patients, which creates high risk for infection. Elders from our memory care unit are susceptible to the high levels of stress and confusion that come from being in totally unfamiliar surroundings.

Compassionate Health Care

Now there's a way to significantly reduce the number of times our elders are subjected to the hassle and risks of going to a medical facility...all while *increasing* their access to healthcare. The answer is telehealth.

Telehealth often conjures up images of a cold, impersonal way of delivering care. Nothing could be farther from reality. Telehealth actually gives us the ability to keep our elders at Kirkhaven where they are safe and comfortable. This eliminates the physical and emotional burden to them and their loved ones while providing a convenient and useful service...especially to those who require frequent medical care.

What Is It?

Telehealth refers to the technology and devices that allow a personal interaction between a patient and physician when they are in two separate locations and an immediate personal visit isn't practical or feasible. In our case, the exam would take place at Kirkhaven with the assistance of a Kirkhaven nurse. This means the patient is comfortable, calm, and safe in his or her own Kirkhaven environment. The physician, meanwhile, is interacting with the patient and nurse using a video monitor to actually see the elder and ask pertinent questions. During the exam the telehealth devices are collecting information about the patient, in real time, and sending it to the physician's monitoring station for immediate assessment. This information might include a specific vital sign such as glucose levels, heart rate, or temperature. Not only does the elder benefit from immediate medical evaluation but all transportation costs, risks, and hassles are eliminated.

Telehealth is not a replacement for, but rather an extension of physician care. Post-op assessments between office visits, physician assessments to determine immediate need for hospitalization, access to physician specialists for consultative services, are all examples of how telehealth can enhance existing medical services.

How You Can Help!

While telehealth is more cost-effective than a trip to the emergency room, it does require upfront funding of \$25,000 for purchasing the technology, devices, and installation. This is where we need your help.

Your donation will help make telehealth a part of Kirkhaven's innovative approach to delivering the best healthcare possible to your loved one. **Please indicate your gift by filling in the appropriate line on the enclosed envelope.** Every amount is appreciated by the entire Kirkhaven family.

Wishing you the joys of peace, health, and family this holiday season and throughout the year.

Amanda D. Brown
Executive Vice President/Administrator

P.S. Learn more about Kirkhaven and how your gift can help those who are important to you. Call me at (585) 461-1991 ext. 3004 or visit www.kirkhaven.com.