

NEW YORK-AREA ALZHEIMER'S HOME CARE AGENCY TO OFFER 'VIRTUAL' SPIRITUAL CARE

Clients Can Connect With HealthCare Chaplaincy Network's Chaplains via Phone, Email, Video

NEW YORK, NY (June 15, 2016)– For individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and their family caregivers, isolation, anxiety, and existential questions often accompany this terminal brain disorder. Now, a New York-area home care agency is collaborating with HealthCare Chaplaincy Network to offer its clients a direct connection to professional health care chaplains who can help with the emotional and spiritual distress surrounding this disease and other illnesses.

ACS Home Care LLC (Alzheimer's Care Specialists), based in Northport, NY and servicing Nassau, Queens, Suffolk, and Westchester counties, is introducing "virtual" professional chaplaincy as a value-added service to new and existing clients. The service, Chat with a Chaplain, enables patients and family members to confidentially speak to a professional multi-faith chaplain via phone, email, or video chat.

The announcement coincides with Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month in June. ACS specializes in Alzheimer's disease, and also serves clients with other illnesses and needs.

This is the first home care agency HCCN is collaborating with to provide the unique service, which is staffed by HCCN's professional multi-faith chaplains. Chaplains are the spiritual care specialists on health care teams; they listen without judgment and provide comfort and meaning.

Chat with a Chaplain is available to anyone, regardless of religion or beliefs, or no religion or beliefs. Clients can obtain emotional and spiritual support as well as submit prayer requests. In the face of illness, common questions include, "Why me?" or "Has God abandoned me?"

Robert Macedonio, RN, president, director of patient care services at ACS Home Care, said he expects people facing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to especially benefit from this service.

"Emotional turmoil and social abandonment commonly accompany this diagnosis and the 'long good-bye' that follows," he said. "With this service, we are extending beyond meeting our clients' physical and mental needs, to address their emotional and spiritual needs during very challenging times."

Rev. Eric J. Hall, HCCN's president and CEO, said HCCN created Chat with a Chaplain to "fill a gap" for people who are being cared for outside of a hospital setting where chaplains traditionally make their rounds.

"Chat with a Chaplain brings spiritual care into the comfort of one's home," he said. "It's a key aspect of whole-person care."

Hall, founder and former president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, and a managing partner at ACS Home Care, concurred that this type of service can be especially important for family caregivers. "It's an aspect of self-care that's often overlooked," he said, "but it's a connection that can help improve quality of life."

About HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™

HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™ is a global health care nonprofit organization founded in 1961 that offers spiritual-related information and resources, and professional chaplaincy services in hospitals, other health care settings, and online. Its mission is to advance the integration of spiritual care in health care through clinical practice, research and education in order to improve patient experience and satisfaction and to help people faced with illness and grief find comfort and meaning—whoever they are, whatever they believe, wherever they are. For more information, visit www.healthcarechaplancy.org, call 212-644-1111, and connect with us on [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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