

Agrace: Adds cardiac nurse specialist to boost support for its patients with heart disease

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MADISON, Wis. – Karen Nissen-Boryczka, RN, BSN, MSHCE, has joined Agrace's clinical services team as its cardiac nurse specialist. This new, specialized position will help Agrace care for its patients who suffer from heart failure, cardiovascular disease or other heart conditions.

Agrace is a nonprofit, community-supported health care organization that provides hospice care, supportive (palliative) care, non-medical personal care, adult day services and grief support across southern Wisconsin. In 2021, 21 percent of Agrace's hospice patients had heart or other circulatory system diseases, a fact that led to the creation of this new role.

Nissen-Boryczka is overseeing the development and growth of Agrace's new American Heart Association-approved cardiac specialty program. She works with Agrace's hospice and supportive care clinicians and its community care partners to support patients who have complex cardiac care needs and need specialized care to manage their symptoms and meet their end-of-life goals.

Nissen-Boryczka's most recent experience includes serving as a heart transplant coordinator at UW Health, Madison, where she managed complex care for post-heart-transplant patients. She has also been a nurse clinician with UW Health Cardiothoracic Surgery and Transplant and UW Health Trauma Life Support Center.

Nissen-Boryczka holds a master's degree in health care ethics from Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., and an undergraduate degree in nursing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“People with cardiac diagnoses often use hospice services for a short time, which means they aren't able to reap the full benefit of the care and support an Agrace hospice team can provide,” said Jennifer Malak, Agrace vice president of homecare operations. “Karen's years of experience and expertise in cardiology will bring valuable guidance to our clinicians, Medical Services Team and community partners, as we work to improve access to and awareness of end-of-life care for people with heart disease.”