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Home Care Nurse Takes to the Airwaves As Host of Local Radio Show

Once a week, on Thursday evenings, Cherry Hill resident Jeff Rutberg, 57, a home care nurse for Bayada Nurses, trades in his stethoscope for a microphone when he takes to the airwaves as host of his own talk radio program. The show, which airs on WNJC 1360 AM, allows Rutberg to combine his love of nursing with his ambition to become a radio personality.

“We focus on healthcare topics geared to people who need care at home,” said Rutberg, who started his program in October. “Guests focus on topics such as preventing falls in the home, how to find a home care provider, helping people understand the maze of insurance issues, safety, fire prevention, and care at home for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes.”

Rutberg has tapped a number of healthcare professionals to share their expertise as guests on the program, called “The Jeff Michaels Show”. He has featured nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists and social workers.

Other guests have included experts in diabetes, dental care and chiropractic care. Guests from Bayada Nurses who have been on the program include Sonja Morrow, RN, Gordon Gonyea, PT, Amie Martinelli, OT, and Marybeth Tompkins, RN.

“We try to provide valuable information, especially to people who are trying to find care for their elderly parents who want to remain independent in their own homes,” said Rutberg, who understands first-hand the challenges confronting those with short or long-term health conditions. Throughout his 34-year nursing career he has worked as a staff nurse, a travel nurse, nurse manager, nurse educator, and a legal nurse consultant. He has worked in home care nursing for nearly a decade, and joined Bayada Nurses in July, 2007.

“The best part about being a home care nurse is helping people regain their health and live more comfortably,” he said. “I really love traveling to different towns and meeting so many fascinating people. My patients have been former politicians, bank presidents, writers, business people, homemakers, and store clerks. They’ve come from all walks of life and enjoy my visits and always share stories from their past. It’s a bonus of the job that I get to care for these wonderful people.”

Thanks to his radio program, Rutberg is able to connect with so many more people who can benefit from the variety of healthcare topics he features.

“The Jeff Michaels Show” is the first foray into professional radio for Rutberg. “When I decided to go to broadcasting school a few years ago, my original goal was to learn how to create training videos that could be used to orient new nurses,” explained Rutberg. “Then I took a class on broadcast interviewing and discovered I really liked it, and was good at it. A major part of each home care nursing visit is about interviewing the patient. I suppose I also have the gift of gab!”

After graduating from broadcasting school last July, Rutberg gathered his demo tapes and started knocking on doors of local stations in Philadelphia, hoping for the chance at an internship. He became discouraged, however, as many of his fellow graduates were considerably younger. That’s when friends encouraged him to aim higher, and use his passion and enthusiasm to get his own show.

“I called the station owner of WNJC, who was very receptive, and the rest, as they say, is history,” he said.

Rutberg has even taken his show on the road, hosting a live broadcast at CareOne, an assisted living facility in Evesham.

“The residents were very nervous at first, but then we passed the mike around and they started participating in the program. They were so enthusiastic, it was great for their morale and it was the perfect chance for me to meet my listeners in person,” said Rutberg, who hopes to continue his live broadcasts at other facilities throughout the area.

In addition to graduating from the Connecticut School of Broadcasting in Cherry Hill, Rutberg holds a Bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Alfred University in Alfred, NY and a Master’s degree in Nursing Administration from Louisiana State University in New Orleans, LA. He is optimistic about the success of his program and welcomes suggestions for future topics. “The Jeff Michaels Show” airs on Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:00 pm on WNJC 1360 AM or live on the internet at www.wnjc1360.com