



Hospice

of the Calumet Area NEWS

Issue No. 34

A Publication for Referring Professionals

January 2011

When is it Time for Hospice?

Hospice brings compassion, dignity and hope to people nearing life's end

(Alexandria, VA) – For some people living with a life-limiting illness, there comes a point when cure is no longer possible. While the possibility of a cure is gone that does not mean a patient and family must abandon all hope. Through hospice care, there is still hope for a peaceful death; hope to spend final months, weeks or days free of pain; and hope for quality time with loved ones in the familiar surroundings of home.

“While there isn’t one specific point in an illness when a person should ask about hospice care, many hospice professionals would suggest that a person think about hospice long before he or she is in a medical crisis,” advises J. Donald Schumacher, president and CEO of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. “In fact, learning about palliative care and hospice as options is something that should happen early in the course of a serious illness and not just in the final days.”

Hospices utilize a team of professionals and trained volunteers to provide expert medical care, pain-and-symptom management, and emotional and spiritual support to patients and family caregivers. All care is tailored to the patient’s needs and wishes.

Hospice helps patients and families focus on living as fully as possible.

“Hospice professionals can be important resources for patients and families, they can help a person figure out what goals are important and help them get

their arms around the fact that their life may be coming to a close,” noted Schumacher.

Considered to be the model for high-quality, compassionate care for people nearing the end of life; hospice offers the services and support that Americans want when coping with life-limiting illness.

Last year, hospice cared for more than 1.56 million patients in the US. NHPCO estimates that 41.6 percent of all deaths in the US were under the care of a hospice program last year.

Facts about hospice:

- Most hospice care is provided in the home. Care is also provided in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and hospice centers.
- Hospice care is fully covered by Medicare, private insurance, and by Medicaid in most states.
- Hospice care is not just for people with cancer. Hospices serve those with advanced Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease, lung disease, HIV/AIDS – anyone who is facing a life-limiting illness.
- The hospice benefit pays for medications and medical equipment related to the illness.
- Hospice care is available as long as a doctor believes the patient is eligible.

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Mission Statement

Hospice of the Calumet Area, a not-for-profit hospice, is dedicated to improving the quality of life through compassionate care for individuals and families facing an end-of-life illness.

- Hospice care can include complementary therapies, such as music and art, to bring additional comfort.
- Hospice's offer grief support to the family following the death of a loved one.

“Ideally, an individual would receive hospice care for the final months of life – not just the final days,” stated Schumacher. “One of the most common sentiments from families who have been helped by hospice care is that they wish they had known about hospice or been referred to hospice sooner.”

A recent report from the Dartmouth Atlas Project, noted in our Dec. 2010 newsletter, looking at care for patients with advanced cancer at the

end of life identified gaps between patient wishes and care received. This highlights the need for people to learn about all options available for care.

Additional research published in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, noted in our Sept.-Oct. 2010 newsletter, found that Medicare beneficiaries who received hospice care lived on average 29 days longer than those who did not opt for hospice near the end of life.

Information to help patients and family caregivers understand the benefits of hospice care is available at: www.HospiceCalumet.org or 219-922-2732, 708-895-8332 or 219-736-2422.



Meet the HCA Admissions Team

L to R: Laurie Yothment, Gail Magsaysay, Joanne Persic (Team Leader), Jennie McClain, Lynn Hubbell, David Frechette, Heather Brooks

Reminder:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has clarified that physicians must sign **and date** hospice certifications, home health plans of care, verbal orders and certifications. A date stamp will no longer be accepted. This change is effective for all documents signed on or after January 1, 2011.

To make a referral or request an informational visit, please call Hospice of the Calumet Area at (219) 922-2732, (708) 895-8332 or (219) 736-2422.