

Take Time for a Little Hospice 101

By Denise Stancill, Director of Business Development, Hospice of Holland, Inc.



It's difficult for many to be accepting of hospice care. And unless hospice services are needed, it is just not something people think about. Then when eventually they are faced with a terminal diagnosis they often feel blind-sided and not fully prepared to make some of the significant decisions that come into play.

You can avoid finding yourself in a similar situation by doing your homework well in advance of needing care. The best approach toward understanding the specialty of hospice care is to be proactive. Don't wait until "it's time" to learn more about this important healthcare option.

What do you need to know about Hospice?

• **Hospice is not just for people with cancer.** Persons with heart, lung or kidney disease,

Alzheimer's disease or other life-limiting illnesses may qualify for hospice services.

• **Patients may not know they are eligible for hospice.** A patient becomes eligible for hospice care when curative options have been exhausted or the risks of treatment outweigh the gains and when the patient's physician and a hospice physician certify the patient's life expectancy to be six months or less if the illness runs its normal course. If at any time the focus should become more curative once more, the patient may choose to withdraw from the program.

• **Not all hospices are the same.** There are many hospice providers that serve residents in West Michigan. They may hold a for-profit or non-profit designation. Some hospices op-

erate independently. Others are affiliated with a hospital system or home health agency.

• **Patients have the right to choose their provider.** Patients who know they desire a specific provider should be prepared to ask for the one they want by name.

• **Hospice care is a specialty.** Hospice care team members are experts at caring for people at end of life. Board certified physicians who specialize in hospice care, and their team of nurses, social workers, hospice aides, chaplains and volunteers, are available to work closely with a patient's physician to provide end-of-life care that enhances his or her quality of life.

• **Hospice doesn't mean to give up hope.** Some people do associate hospice with giving

up hope. But the truth is hope can take many forms, especially for those facing end of life issues. They may have hope for time with loved ones, hope for pain-free days and nights, and hope for dignity in their final days. With hospice, these hopes can become a reality.

• **The goal of hospice care is to neither prolong life nor hasten death.** It is intended to enhance the quality of life by providing pain relief and comfort as the illness runs its normal course.

For more information about Hospice of Holland programs and services, to make a referral, or for answers to your questions about hospice care, please call 616-396-2972. View www.hollandhospice.org and hear from others why care from Hospice of Holland made a difference for their loved one.



Take time now to understand hospice.

Research shows that the majority of people who engage hospice services for a loved one wish they had done so sooner. Take the time now to Understand Hospice.

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Understand Hospice is a service of Hospice of Holland, whose mission is to provide end-of-life care to patients facing terminal illness and their caregivers. Contact us today at 616-396-2972 to learn how hospice can help.

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