

Dispelling the *Mystery* and *Myths* of Hospice

November is National Home Care and Hospice Month. We recognize this month as a way to celebrate the work of home healthcare and hospice providers who make such a profound difference in so many lives. We renew our efforts to reach those who could benefit from our services. Although our care providers and services touch thousands of people every year hospice remains, in particular, virtually unknown and very misunderstood.

Hospice Month is a time to focus on dispelling the mystery and the myths of this specialized kind of care; it provides an opportunity to inspire conversation and highlight the importance of making thoughtful decisions about end of life care.

Hospice is a unique and critically important service for members of our community who are facing the end of life. Confronting a terminal illness or a life-limiting condition is never easy and, for families, it is the most difficult and vulnerable time they will ever endure. Making decisions, getting organized, thinking about the future, and trying to keep someone comfortable at a point in time when everyone is tired and overwhelmed, can feel unbearable.

Hospice can help. Death is a naturally occurring event in all lives, and hospice provides the kind of care that can bring peace, comfort, relief, and dignity to both the patient and to the family. Hospice is not a death sentence, and it is certainly not about “giving up.” By keeping patients comfortable and providing the support families need, the end of life becomes a more natural process that can be accepted with greater understanding. That support helps to shift the focus to the life that exists and should be celebrated and remembered.

The dedicated professionals who help our patients and families during this difficult time are extraordinary people. Every week they gather for several hours to discuss their patients, and to share their knowledge, insight, and strength. Sharing as a team enables them to provide the very best care for every individual, and his or her family. Our professionals are supported by over 100 volunteers who assist families by running errands, preparing meals, or sitting vigil to provide company or respite.

More people wish to spend their final days at home. This, combined with the aging population, deserves our attention. Celebrating Hospice Month keeps us mindful of these issues and inspires us to make others aware of them as well. With that in mind, we encourage you to acquaint yourself with the principles of hospice. Ensure that your advanced directives are in order, or discuss your end of life plans with someone you love. If you are already acquainted with hospice, share your experiences with family and friends. Hospice provides both peace of mind and a peaceful transition at a most vulnerable time, and telling your story might encourage another individual to learn more about the compassionate care hospice provides.

Remember that the Visiting Nurse Association of Manchester and Southern NH is your community hospice. Whether you are concerned about yourself, someone you love, or someone you know, call the VNA of Manchester to find out more about our services. We can provide peace, comfort and care, as we have in the Greater Manchester area for more than 100 years. We are here when you need us. Call the Visiting Nurse Association at 603-663-HOME or 800-624-6084. 



VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION
OF MANCHESTER & SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE, INC.

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