

Compassionate Connections

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**Mary Washington
Healthcare**
Hospice and Grief Support
Services

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Hospice Insights

Hospice: What You Need to Know About End-of-Life Care

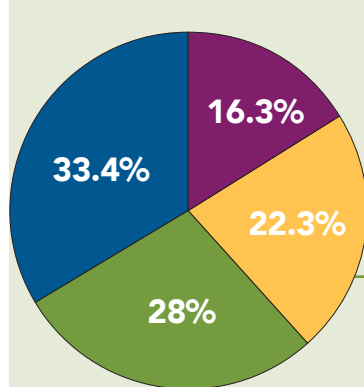
Learn about 'fighting the fight' for patients' comfort, following their wishes before they die

by Kim Keister, AARP, Updated October 14, 2021

Think of hospice as a philosophy of compassionate care for a loved one at the end of life. Though the word "hospice" might trigger the notion of giving up on life, the goal is to give a person the best possible quality of life—emotional, physical and spiritual comfort. And studies have shown that patients who chose hospice care lived almost a month longer than similar patients who did not choose hospice.

"Hospice is an interdisciplinary model of care. It's holistic, person-centered and aligned with individual needs," says Edo Banach, president and chief executive of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Alexandria, Virginia.

Hospice on rise for end-of-life care



More than 1.5 million Medicare beneficiaries used hospice care in 2018, the most recent data available, a 4 percent increase from the previous year. Fifty-five percent were women, and more than 3 in 5 were 75 or older.

■ **Younger than 65:** 16.3%

■ **65 to 74:** 22.3%

■ **75 to 84:** 28%

■ **85 or older:** 33.4%

Source: National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

Hospice also offers a needed break and counseling for the family, in particular for a family caregiver.

Medicare and Medicaid typically cover the full cost of hospice services, and private insurance policies generally follow the Medicare model, says Theresa Forster, vice president for hospice policy for the National Association for Home Care & Hospice in Washington, D.C. Medicare pays for about 85 percent of U.S. hospice care.

"Regarding Medicare or Medicaid, virtually anything that the patient needs for terminal illness which is determined to be appropriate is going to be free of charge," Forster says. "Once you go into hospice under your plan of care, you will receive it."

Who is a hospice candidate?

A doctor must certify that a patient meets both of these requirements:

1. **A fatal medical condition** for which the patient is not seeking curative treatment.
2. **An expected prognosis** of six months or less. That may change soon.

"You shouldn't give up curative treatment in order to get hospice care, and that's being tested right now through a demonstration from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services," Banach says. "In the future we will be in a better place with fewer limitations on hospice."

The number of racial and ethnic minorities who receive hospice care has been increasing, especially Hispanics and Asian American/Pacific Islanders. But in 2018, the most recent year for which data is available, more than 4 in 5 hospice patients were white.

Talk far in advance

Ahead of time, perhaps even years before a decision is necessary, talk with family members about their wishes for the end of their lives. Put it all in writing, perhaps in such legal documents as an advance directive, advance care planning or a living will.

"It is a huge comfort for a family caregiver to know what a loved one would want," says Amy Goyer, AARP family and caregiving expert.

Most hospice care is provided at the loved one's home, whether that is a private residence, an assisted living facility or a nursing home. Hospice also could be provided at the caregiver's home, a hospital or a freestanding hospice facility.

Members of a multidisciplinary hospice team work together to develop a care plan that

centers on a patient's medical, psychological and spiritual support. The team members can include these professionals:

- The patient's personal physician
- A hospice physician or medical director
- Clergy or other spiritual counselors
- Hospice aides
- Occupational, physical or speech therapists
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Trained volunteers

Roles of caregiver, hospice workers

Typically, a family member serves as the primary caregiver and helps make decisions for the loved one when appropriate. The caregiver is engaged during a loved one's battle against disease and later during hospice.

"What's hard for the family caregiver is that the person has been in the mode of taking care of the patient for so long, of searching out and researching the options, and finding the best treatments and keeping that positive hope alive," Goyer says. "Now you are flipping and not fighting that fight anymore, but you are focusing instead in fighting the fight for their comfort and following their wishes." Hospice workers do help in that fight with these kinds of services:

- **Assisting the patient** and family members with the emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects of dying
- **Having a hospice doctor** make house calls or driving the patient to doctors' appointments
- **Helping with bathing** and dressing, chores, food preparation and laundry
- Instructing family on how to care for the loved one
- **Managing pain** and other symptoms
- **Providing general companionship**, which can give a family caregiver time to run quick errands or do other work around the house

Also, when your loved one dies, hospice workers can provide counseling for surviving family and friends.

How to find high-quality care

A caregiver should research hospice agencies and identify the top choice or choices well before this care is needed, experts say.

"It's a much better idea to do diligent homework and make some decisions while things are calm," Banach says.

- **Ask for recommendations** from doctors, nursing homes, family members and anyone who has knowledge of hospice care.
- **Look for accreditation** through the Accreditation Commission for Health Care, the Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP) program or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.
- **Visit Hospice Compare** on Medicare.gov. All firms listed qualified for Medicare certification by providing 15 core services.
- **Visit hospice facilities** or agencies in person to determine how you feel about the people you meet.

Kim Keister is a freelance journalist and former executive editor at AARP.

Mary Washington Healthcare exists to improve the health of the people in the communities we serve.

As a not-for-profit organization, we invest our profits back into our work through activities like upgrading our technology, developing new services, and hiring new staff. The result is continuous improvement in the scope and quality of care we are able to provide to the community. In addition to investing in our organization, we invest heavily in our community. Our not-for-profit status drives us to be the kind of organization that provides care to those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. As a not-for-profit hospice our services are covered by most health insurance plans, including Medicare Part A, Medicaid, Tricare, private insurance with hospice coverage, and private pay. However, Mary Washington Hospice provides care to all eligible patients, regardless of their inability to pay.

Questions for hospice providers

Here are a few important questions to ask when you are visiting with an accredited agency you are considering for providing hospice care for your loved one.

- **Are staff nurses and doctors available 24 hours a day?** You'll want that emergency staffing, especially as your loved one enters the final few days of life.
- **Is your medical director board certified?** This is not a requirement, but the extra step of certification is another assurance of experience and training.
- **How many years has the organization been in operation?** Many U.S. hospice programs trace their beginnings to the 1980s AIDS epidemic, and Congress made hospice a permanent Medicare benefit in 1985.
- **How many patients does the hospice care for?** Smaller hospices may provide more personalized care, but those serving at least 100 patients have more resources.
- **What is the typical caseload for your hospice nurses or nurse practitioners?** Ideally, nurses should manage no more than 12 patients at a time, especially if they travel. They do not see all patients daily.
- **Can you meet our needs for a care plan?** Have an idea of what you and your loved one want and whether that is within the scope of the hospice's care.
- **What is expected in terms of help from the family?** This is especially important if much of the previous caregiving has been long distance.
- **What are the options for inpatient care?** Sometimes staying in a hospice facility is temporary and can be used to stabilize patients until they can return home.

Volunteer Spotlight



Denise Harrod

Volunteer, Mary
Washington Healthcare
Hospice Services

Denise Harrod is a seasoned Mary Washington Hospice “Renaissance” Volunteer, which means she serves in many different roles as a hospice volunteer.

She is currently a lead volunteer for our “Tuck-In Volunteer Program” which assist with making sure all patients and families have what they need going into the weekend. This program is key to providing exceptional service to our patients and their family members. In addition, Denise assists with administrative and patient/family care as needed or requested.

Denise, like many volunteers came to hospice work because of a personal experience with end-of-life. Her mother Doris Pharr had a stroke the beginning of October 2018 and was taken to Mary Washington Hospital and was later admitted to Mary Washington Hospice care. She was touched with how the Mary Washington Hospice team took the time to explain her mother’s transition and provided excellent care.

In addition, while she was in the hospital sitting vigil with her mother, she had an interaction with another family who was going through the same end-of-life journey. Before she knew it, she was able to provide companionship and support in the middle of her own end-of-life journey with her mother. The opportunity to share and care comes naturally to Denise and she continues to have an empathic ear for patients and families she encounters while volunteering.

“It is a blessing and a gift to be a part of this team.”
—Denise

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call Kathy J. Wall, Volunteer Program Support, MWHC Hospice Services at 540.741.3595.

Mary Washington Hospice is pleased to introduce our new Medical Director, Adam Knudson, MD.

Dr. Adam Knudson recently joined Mary Washington Hospice Services as our new Medical Director. He joins us from northern Virginia where he spent the last two years serving as both a hospice physician and a palliative medicine physician.

Originally from Wisconsin, Dr. Knudson moved to the east coast to attend medical school at Georgetown University School of Medicine. He returned to the Midwest for internal medicine residency at Loyola University Medical Center in the Chicago area before gradually migrating back eastward. Dr. Knudson completed his hospice & palliative medicine fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where he stayed on as a Clinical Instructor of Medicine while also completing a Master of Science degree in medical education.

Dr. Knudson holds board certifications in Internal Medicine as well as Hospice & Palliative Medicine. His clinical interests include effective communication skills, end-of-life symptom management, and health policy. He also feels strongly that end-of-life care is best provided by not-for-profit hospice organizations, like Mary Washington, rather than for-profit ones.

Dr. Knudson's non-clinical interests include photography, traveling, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavors, and the Green Bay Packers. Emblematic of his fandom, Dr. Knudson is proud to own a share of the thirteen-time NFL champions.



Adam Knudson, MD

Medical Director, MWHC
Hospice Services

Light Up a Life 2021



The 4th annual Light Up A Life Illumination was held on Thursday, November 18th, 2021. It was truly an evening of light and love where we brought life to our memories and recalled the impact people we loved had on our lives. More than \$22,000 was raised this year for Mary Washington Hospice. Funds from the event go toward our grief support programming and expressive therapy programs. A huge thank you is extended to all who supported the event.



Mary Washington Healthcare

Hospice and Grief Support Services

To view the recording of the event visit
LightUpALife@mwhc.com.



A Special Thank You to our Event Sponsors

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Light Up a Life

We Forever Honor and Remember

<i>A</i>	Charlotte Able Johnny Alarcon Jo Amoia Rosemond Arthur James Ashby III Cynthia Ann Badott Margaret Joan Baxter	<i>D</i>	Diana D'Amico Anna Irene Davenport Larry Carson Davenport John F. Davenport, Sr. Regina Deppenbrook Audrey DePrince Jermone L. Desgrosielliers Christine Dickerson Ms. Marcella Dickinson Lillian Diner-Sweet Lena May Dodd Andrew Dodson-Looney Frances Dohmann Herman Dohmann, Sr. Stephanne Marie Downing Mabel Owens Brown Driver Austen Laina Dunn		Joseph Fredrick, Sr. Ellie Shepherd Freeman Margaret Pitts Freeman Elizabeth Frost Lincoln Frost, Sr. Families served by Laurel Hill Funeral Home and Laurel Hill Memorial Park		Edwin Hitt, Jr. David Holsinger David Holsinger Harvey Hunziker Julie Hurst Chris Daniel Hylton Mary Virginia Jackson
<i>B</i>	Bill Bearden Bridget Beasley Bridget Payne Beasley Donald Beasley Wallace W. Berry Kerrigan Blackwell Daryl Bobbitt Garry Bobbitt Judy Bowie Bruce Branham Cynthia Freeman Branscome Megan Branscome James A. Burnham Kathryn Burton Victor Burton Janet Bykowski	<i>E</i>	Lisa L. Edwards Thelma L. Edwards Eileen Ehrlich Aloha English Robert Epps	<i>G</i>	Bill Gaines Bill Gates John Gil Robert S. Gilbert Sean Gilligan Emily Elaine Gilman Chris Goldsmith Betty A. Goldstein Beulah Gracik Gary Graham Chuck Green Mary Belle B. Green Allen H. Green, II Allen H. Green, III Alice Louise Greene	<i>J</i>	Samuel H. Jackson Charles W. Jennings Nancy D. Jennings Alice Gray Johnson Angela Kristine Johnson Richard W. Johnston Katie Jones Linda Keiner Doris Kelly Doris F. Kelly Walter Kelly Walter M. Kelly Billy Kent Joseph "Butch" Kenyon Glenn Kimble Matt King George King, Jr. Stanley John Kloda Shirley A. Kolb George Kuzma Donn Langfitt Elizabeth Lavin Thomas Lavin Cecil Lemons Ora Mae Lemons Robert Leong Audrey P. Lewis
<i>C</i>	Walter W. Chytilo David Conklin Dennis R. Connors John F. Connors Marie M. Connors Michael J. Cook Ray B. Cook Vicki Cooke Leatrice Corbin Willard Corbin Ruth Wilson Crawley Doris Crowley Henry B. Custis	<i>F</i>	Linda A. Farr Darrell Ferrell Elsie Ferrell George Ferrell Jo Ferrell Petrona Ferrufino Barbara Fish Leonard Fish Shirley Fleming Leonard Fletcher Phil Flynn Susan Francis Mary Fredrick Joseph Fredrick, Jr.	<i>H</i>	Tony Hall David Hammond Kaylin Hart Zona M. Hart Samuel Harte Frank M. Hartman Pam Hathcock Dorothy M. Hawthorne Frank L. Hawthorne, Sr. Margaret Heath William Heath Barbara Duell Hewitt Katherine Hitt	<i>K</i>	
						<i>L</i>	

Light Up a Life

We Forever Honor and Remember

<i>M</i> Donna Rae Mason Peggie Mason Ralph Mason Lawrence B. Mason, Jr. Lowell Z. Matthews James R. McCann, Jr. Vickie Denise McCarthy Melissa McClelland Charles A. McCormack John Robert McMullan Clinton Shane Morgan Loretta Lee Morgan John W. Morley, II Stella Rodgers Mullen Joan Murphy John Murphy	John Donald Payne Nelda L. Payne Robert D. Payne Roger L. Payne Kathy Perusi Chris Peyton Kim Peyton Teresa Peyton Doris Pharr Florence Pinkwas-Berkovitz Alvin L. Pitts, Sr. Doris Powell Fred Powell Jack Pretts Grace Price Jerry Price Jerry Purks	Scott Sekulow Howard Sell Marilyn Sell Aileen Senna Dion Shade Martha Shelton Gus Shizas O'Neta Lee Shorter Mary Shover Katherine Morgan Sigman Marian Silver Sylvester Silver Roy Simpson Emmanuel Atta Simpson, Jr. Alice Skinker Ellen Skinker Cody Slayton Liam Slayton Barbara Smith Jere P. Smith Michael Lee Smith Richard Snow William M. Sokol Christina Sokolowski Errell Spangler Joseph Stoicsitz, Sr. Helen Stoicstiz Mary Ann Strassburg Roger Strassburg Jean Strickland Jean H. Strickland Gladys Strickler Al Stuart Florence J. Styka Frank G. Styka	Buster Sullivan Judy Surles Frank Sweet <i>T</i> Barbara Jane Taylor Robert Wilson Taylor David Shea Teeple, Jr. Ms. Belinda Tierney Eleanor Nanita Townsend Arley Tavy Townsend, Jr. Jeannette Traylor Julie Tubbs <i>U</i> Carolyn (Lynn) Unser <i>V</i> Thomas Vitale <i>W</i> Martin Rousseau Walker Paul Rae Walker, III Andrew B. Walker, Sr. Jean Ann Wall Mr. Alan Wall Barbara M. Walor Duncan Walters Linda Wandrick Raymond F. Wardynski William V. White Hazel Wilkinson Reva A. Williams Edith C. Withers William C. Withers, Sr. Stephanie Lynn Wolcott <i>Y-Z</i> David Yonker H. Wayne Young Myrna Zumwalt Regina Zumwalt
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MWHC Grief Support Services

9 (Reasonable) New Year's Resolutions for Grievers

If you're considering making a New Year's resolution this year, there are quite a few you can choose that will simultaneously help you cope with grief. In fact, we have a list of 64 New Year's Resolutions for Grievers, but 64 is admittedly somewhat overwhelming so, instead, here are a solid 8 New Year's resolutions for grievers.

1. Go easy on yourself:

This may sound obvious or even cliché, but it is easier said than done. Don't place expectations on yourself that you may not be able to live up to. Whenever possible, try not to set timetables on when elements of your life (like work or other activities) will be back to 'normal'. Don't pressure yourself or allow others to pressure you into feeling like you should be 'over' the loss. This may feel like the opposite of a resolution because it's far from goal oriented, but really, being kind to yourself may be the best New Year's resolution a griever can make.

2. Spend time with people you like:

Life after grief can be isolating. Resolve to put a little effort into connecting with people who make you feel happy and well supported. You may gravitate towards individuals who have also experienced loss, or you may want to spend time with people far removed from your experience. Also, you may choose to distance

yourself from those who have not been helpful or supportive.

Think about what you need – an escape, the absence of judgment, people who are fun, people who understand, or people who remember your loved one – and then plan accordingly.

3. Engage in one hobby or activity that makes you feel good:

I will stop short of preaching about the importance of exercise. I think we hear a lot about exercise resolutions, and frankly, you may not be in the mood.

True, exercise does wonders for your mental and physical health, so if the hobby you enjoy involves physical activity, then ten bonus points for you. But that said, any hobby that you find enjoyable can be beneficial to your mental health. Hobbies can provide you with all of the following:

- An escape
- An outlet for difficult thoughts and feelings
- A means for connecting with other people
- An excuse to have alone time
- Feelings of accomplishment, productivity, and fulfillment

Journaling and writing are excellent hobbies for grievers, as are hobbies involving self-expression (like art and photography).

4. Be honest about how you feel:

A few weeks or months after a loss, many people feel compelled to start putting on a 'happy face' for their family and friends. You may want people to start treating you like you're "normal." Or you may be worried that if you keep talking about your loved one's death, you will alienate those around you. Perhaps you so desperately want to be okay again that you try to fool even yourself.

Over time though, all this pretending can become stressful. I understand there are valid reasons why you may not want to tell your co-worker or your cashier at Walmart how your day is really going, but finding ways to express your true feelings in places where you feel safe to do so can be beneficial.

5. Speak your loved one's name:

Keep speaking your loved one's name. Remember them on holidays with family and friends, write about them in e-mails or letters, recount stories. It can make you feel much closer to those who are no longer here.

6. Embrace one of your loved one's values, hopes, or dreams.

Think of one thing that your loved one really cared about or wanted, and then find a way to make that passion a part of your life. This resolution may take work, but it will feel great to carry out a dream or passion that started with your loved one.

Think creatively, maybe you think your husband would have wanted you to have a companion, so you get a little kitten. Possibly your Disney vacation savings has been wiped out by months of cancer treatments. Get the jar back out and start saving again.

7. Support someone else:

When you're ready, look for ways to support others who are grieving. Try going to a support group with the intent to give as well as receive support; offer support and suggestions to others in online support forums, blogs, or social media sites; or send a card to someone in the community who has recently been through a loss. Grief changes us forever. You may eventually find that it has given you wisdom, strength, and insight; share these gifts with others in need. Please keep in mind, though, everyone grieves differently. Remember, their experience may not be the same as yours, and what helped you may not be helpful to them. If you are further out from your loss and thinking about this as a resolution, you may want to check out our post about supporting others.

8. Plan opportunities for remembrance:

Think of 1 or 2 ways to formally remember your loved one. You could participate in a walk/run in their honor, start a scholarship fund, or have a memorial party on their birthday.

Also, think of some less formal ways to remember. You could have a favorite photo of the person framed for yourself, create a memorial scrapbook, or write about your favorite memories in a journal.

9. Seek formal support:

A loss can have a profound effect on individuals and families. Maybe you've been thinking for a while that you might want to seek out a support group, grief center, or professional therapist, either by yourself or with your family members. If this is something you've been planning to do, resolve to take the first steps at the start of the new year.

—Eleanor Haley
Whatsourgrief.com

Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning is making decisions about the healthcare you would want to receive if you're facing a medical crisis and preparing for the unexpected while you are well and able to make difficult decisions for yourself. Advance Care Planning includes:

- Getting information on the types of life-sustaining treatments that are available.
- Deciding what types of treatment you would or would not want should you be diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.
- Sharing your personal wishes with your loved ones. Documenting in writing what types of treatment you would or would not want
- and who you chose to speak for you, should you be unable to speak for yourself.

82% of people say it's important to put their wishes in writing, but only 23% have done it.



In the face of uncertainty,
make sure your loved ones
know your wishes.

The Heart of Hospice



“You matter because of who you are. You matter to the last moment of your life, and we will do all we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.”

—Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the first modern hospice

Advance Care Planning, Continued

Advance Care Planning Action Steps:

1. Create a Living Will and Medical Power of Attorney.
2. Store documents in a safe but accessible place.
3. Discuss your wishes with your doctor and with loved ones.
4. Give a copy of your Advance Directive to your doctor.
5. Review documents wishes change.

Questions About Advance Care Planning?

Please call Mary Washington Healthcare Patient Relations Department at **540.741.3955**.

For more information, please visit **mwhc.com** and search Advance Care Planning.

We Honor Veterans

Mary Washington Hospice is Proud to Honor our Veterans

As the nation honored Veterans for their military service on Veterans Day, November 11, 2021, Mary Washington Hospice was proud to have partnered with seventeen assisted living and skilled nursing facilities in our region as well as twenty Active-Duty Marines from Quantico Marine Corp Base. Together we recognized more than 300 veterans for their service and sacrifice to our nation.

"We thank each person that participated this year in our Veterans Day activities and pinning events. This recognition would not be possible without our staff, the Marines, and our volunteers continued support each Veterans Day and throughout the year.", said Kathy Wall, Mary Washington Hospice Volunteer and Bereavement Program Support Representative.

Mary Washington Hospice's participation in the NHPCO's We Honor Veterans program allows our team to meet our commitment to increase Veterans' awareness and provide compassionate, high-quality, end-of-life care. More than 680,000 Veterans every year – or 25 percent of all the people who die in this country, are Veterans. Mary Washington Hospice believes it is important to say "thank you" to our Country's Veterans.



Please contact Mary Washington Hospice at 540.741.3595 or email hospiceinfo@mwhc.com to learn more about the ways we support our nation's heroes and our participation in the We Honor Veterans Program.

Meet the Team

Jennifer Moore, MSW, LMSW, Supervisor,
Counseling & Liaison Services



Jennifer Moore has been an Associate at Mary Washington Hospice for more than fifteen years with her most recent role as Supervisor of Counseling and Liaison Services. Being a social worker has been a very rewarding experience for Jennifer because she gets to meet new and exciting people and share her knowledge and expertise during a very difficult time in their lives.

Now, in her role as the Counseling Supervisor, Jen is helping her team of counselors reach their full potential in helping patients and families maneuver through their hospice journeys. Jennifer is married to her spouse Darion, and they have 3 children, Anastasia, Alesia, and Darion (DJ). Now that she is an empty nester, her two cockapoos, Bella and Curly, keep her busy.

We are honored to be chosen as the Best in the "Burg's Most Respected Hospice Agency again this year. Thank you to the Fredericksburg community for your votes of confidence.



**Mary Washington
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Hospice and Grief Support
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*Mary Washington Healthcare exists to improve the
health of the people in the communities we serve.*



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