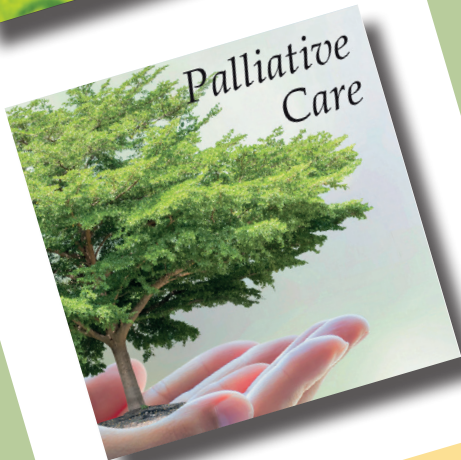


Compassionate Connections

Spring 2021 - Edition 3




**Mary Washington
Healthcare**
Hospice, Palliative & Grief
Support Services

Hospice.intake@mwhc.com
540.741.3580
Hospice.mwhc.com

Hospice Insights

MEDICARE HOSPICE COMPARE The Decisions is in Your Hands

How do you know which type of hospice care is the best for yourself or a loved one?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has created a website to help you get some answers (www.medicare.gov/hospicecompare).

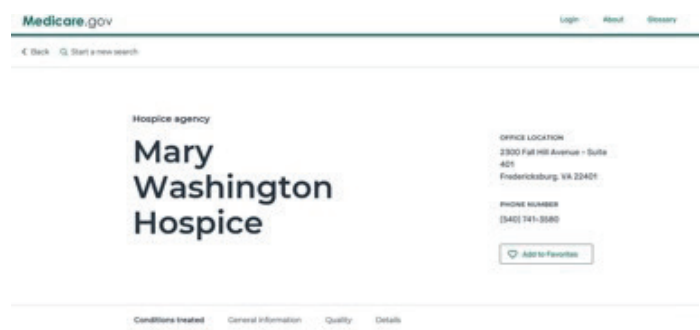
Hospice Compare provides objective measures of each hospice agency's services to assist with this important decision. Once you or your family member have decided to use the services of a hospice provider, this site will help you narrow down the choices.

Hospice agencies report to CMS on several criteria, which have been gathered and compared for your use on the *Hospice Compare* website. Currently, nearly 3,900 hospice centers report to CMS on topics such as pain management and thoroughness of patient screening. The *Hospice Compare* website is a tool to help promote the best patient care and encourage respect for the preferences of hospice patients.

How Does the Hospice Care Website Work?

The main screen at the CMS's Hospice Compare site allows you to look for hospice care in your area. You can also search for a specific facility if you have the name or a partial name. For example, a search for "Foothills" brings up a phone number and link for each of several local hospices that include this word.

Another way to search is to enter the zip code for your area. You'll be able to filter your search results according to whether the facilities are government-based, non-profit or for-profit. To compare them, click on the green "Add to Compare" button on the right side of each hospice link. You can choose up to three that interest you.



At the top of the screen, there will be another green button that says, "Compare Agencies." Clicking it pulls up detailed information about the three hospices you have chosen. From here, you can see how these facilities or services compare to the national average and each other for managing pain, treating symptoms, and accommodating patient preferences. You can print the information out and compare each hospice side-by-side.

Another valuable resource on the site is a printable questionnaire to use when interviewing hospices. It includes questions about what's covered, how insurance is applied, nursing routines, pain management and more. The checklist also has questions about how the hospice communicates with a patient's family.

The Decision is in Your Hands

In a stressful situation, having access to information adds stability and gives reassurance that you're making the right decision. How well an agency provides care makes a difference in how you or a loved one spends her remaining time. Hospice Compare makes it easier to quickly see the quality of care for the agencies that you're considering. It also provides information on those providers that are at risk for being terminated by Medicare. Making decisions like these can be tough, especially when you're making them on behalf of a loved one. Medicare's new website is designed to eliminate the confusion when it comes to choosing a hospice provider.

Source: [medicare.net/Medicare-hospice-compare-helps-need](https://www.medicare.net/Medicare-hospice-compare-helps-need)

Affirming Life Through Compassionate Care

Hospice is a special kind of care for anyone dealing with a life-limiting illness offering hope and support beyond traditional care. Mary Washington Healthcare Hospice Services is a certified, not-for-profit medical hospice, delivering high quality patient and family care to the Fredericksburg Region for more than 25 years.



The Heart of Hospice

"To the hospice nurses, social worker and others who helped with my mom's care, I cannot thank you all enough for your love to my mom and helping her die in a respectful way. She loved seeing every one of you. You were always there when I needed you. I will always know how much you cared for her."

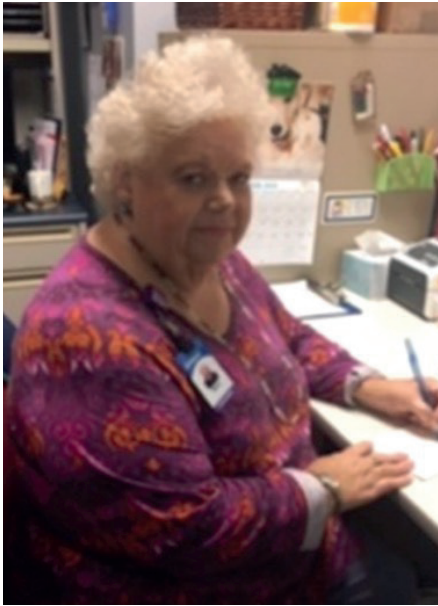
Love, Susan



“Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.”

— Thomas Moore

Volunteer Spotlight



Ms. Marie Roberson has been a Mary Washington Healthcare volunteer since 2005. She signed on as a patient and family care volunteer and then worked in Mary Washington Medical Records as an administrative volunteer for many years. For the past four years Marie has been an important administrative volunteer assisting in both our Volunteer and Bereavement Departments. Prior to hospice volunteering Marie volunteered in the giftshop at Mary Washington Hospital. Retired from the federal government, Marie also worked for the Department of the Army.

"I truly value my time here as a volunteer with at Hospice and love giving back to our community."

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



*Thank you to the Fredericksburg community
for your votes of confidence.*

Who can benefit from Palliative Care?



Palliative Care can be helpful in any stage of serious illness, improving quality of life. Palliative care can be provided along with curative treatment and can help patients understand their choices for medical treatment.

Mary Washington Healthcare offers dedicated palliative services by a skilled, compassionate team of professionals trained in this special area of medicine.

Palliative care is provided by a team of specialists that include:

- Nationally certified palliative care physicians
- Nationally certified palliative care nurse practitioners
- Palliative social worker, licensed eligible
- Board certified healthcare chaplain
- Palliative care nurses

Our staff members meet with the family members involved to discuss the patient's treatment plan and what the next steps are. They are available for inpatient consultation, translating medical jargon, managing symptoms, counseling patients spiritually and emotionally, and more. We provide educational resources to patients, their families, and their communities.

Palliative care includes:

- Treatment of symptoms related to serious illness.
- Information and open discussion about your choices for disease treatment and symptom management, which often includes family meetings.
- Guidance and support in navigating an often-complex healthcare system.
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Assistance in preventing or easing suffering to improve your quality of life.

For more information about Mary Washington Palliative Services please call 540.741.3580 or visit palliative.mwhc.com.

National Healthcare Decisions Day



NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY

★ *your decisions matter* ★



National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) exists to inspire, educate, and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning. NHDD is an initiative to encourage patients to express their wishes regarding healthcare and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be. (www.nhdd.org)

Mary Washington Healthcare, along with other community, state, and national organizations, is leading an effort to raise awareness of the importance of advance healthcare decision-making.

National Healthcare Decisions Day encourages all adults in the U.S. to consider their healthcare wishes and to put them in writing in case they ever become unable to communicate.

A key goal of NHDD is to demystify healthcare decision-making and make the topic of advance care planning inescapable. Among other things, NHDD helps people understand that advance healthcare decision-making includes much more than living wills; it is a process that should focus first on conversation and choosing an agent." NHDD.org

As a result of National Healthcare Decisions Day, many more people in our community can be expected to have thoughtful conversations about their healthcare decisions and complete reliable advance directives to make their wishes known. Fewer families and healthcare providers will have to struggle with making difficult healthcare decisions in the absence of guidance from the patient, and healthcare providers and facilities will be better equipped to address advance healthcare planning issues before a crisis and be better able to honor patient wishes when the time comes to do so.

Visit www.nhdd.org to learn more about advance directives and to find the short version of the form.

Grief and Bereavement Resources

Grief is a healthy response to death. Our grief counselors and volunteers at Mary Washington Grief Support Services are specifically trained to listen closely to your concerns, answer your questions, and offer encouragement, empathy, and support. No two experiences are the same. Just as our lives differ, each person's journey through grief is unique.

MWHC Grief Support Services Mission

Our mission is to nurture individuals and families along their grief journey as they cope with the death of a loved one. All programs are provided at no cost to the participant. We are here for individuals and families in the community and are funded by the community through private donations, fund raising events and grants.

For more information, please call 540.741.3580, or visit griefsupport.mwhc.com.



“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

Grief Peer Support Groups

A grief support group can offer those who are coping with the loss of a loved one:

- Information about the grief process.
- Education on ways to cope with grief.
- Support for sharing grief and memories
- Opportunities to be with others grieving the death of a loved one.

Due to COVID-19, the majority of our groups are not meeting in person.

The following groups continue to meet virtually:

Death of a Child

Meets 1st Thursday 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Death of a Parent

Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Understanding Your Grief

Meets Quarterly – Dates TBD

If you would like to be notified when the following groups resume meeting, please call us at 540-741-1847 or email at griefsupport@mwhc.com

Finding Words for Grief Writing Group

Survivor of a Suicide Loss (SOSL)

Death of a Spouse or Partner

Military Care Group

Family Expressions *(Program for families with children up to age 12)*

Teens Helping Teens Writing and Collage *(ages 13-18)*

Teens Helping Teens *(ages 13-18)*

There is no fee to participate in any programs, but registration is required for groups. Please contact GriefSupport@mwhc.com or call 540.741.1874 to register.



Mary Washington Healthcare

Grief Support Services

GriefSupport.mwhc.com



Advance Care Planning

Frequently Asked Questions provided by the Virginia Bar Association:

Why create an Advance Directive?

An Advance Directive allows you to state your choices for healthcare or to name someone to make those choices for you, if you become unable to make decisions about your medical treatment. It enables you to say "yes" to treatment you want, or "no" to treatment you do not want.

What kind of Advance Directive do I need?

You may execute a power of attorney for healthcare, a written healthcare directive, or both. Of the two kinds of Advance Directives, a power of attorney for healthcare is broader. A written healthcare directive is helpful in stating your wishes, but it may not be possible to anticipate all possible medical situations for which your written healthcare directive might apply. The best way to protect your interests, however, is to execute both.

Are Advanced Directives only for end-of-life issues?

No. Advance directives may address any type of care in situations in which you cannot make decisions for yourself. For example, an advance directive may address psychiatric (mental health) issues, chronic disease issues, and wishes about admissions to certain types of healthcare facilities.

Can I just say my wishes orally?

You should always share your healthcare wishes with your loved ones and your doctors. However, you may only create an Oral Advance Directive if you have a terminal condition and tell your wishes directly to your doctor. Also, putting your wishes in writing reduces confusion about your wishes since people often forget or misunderstand what was said orally.

What if I'm unsure of what healthcare I may want?

You should still execute an Advance Directive to describe the important values and beliefs you have. You can also indicate your religious beliefs. Often, these types of statements will help others make appropriate healthcare choices for you when you cannot make them yourself.

I don't know medical terms. What do I need to say?

You can, and should, put your wishes in your own words. Just describe as best you can what medical care you do and do not want.

I'm young and/or in good health. Do I need an Advance Directive?

Yes. No one knows what the future might bring. For example, you might need someone to make medical decisions for you in the event that you suffer a sudden injury or illness (such as a car accident). It is better to choose this person in advance and tell him or her about

your healthcare wishes. If you do not choose someone in advance, the law will assign a decision maker who must guess about your wishes.

Who should I pick as my healthcare Power of Attorney?

You may appoint any adult (18 years or older). This person needs to be accessible, but he/she does not need to live in Virginia. When you choose your agent, make sure that you have chosen someone who will be able to make potentially difficult decisions about your care, is willing to serve as your agent, and is aware of your wishes. You should also choose an alternate in case your first choice is unavailable (for example, your first choice may not be found or may not be willing to be your agent).

I have several children. Can I appoint all of them?

You really should pick just one person as your agent. Picking more than one person can result in a conflict, delay decision-making, or result in an inability to make any decision at all. You can include your other children by letting them know your choices. You may also require your one agent to talk with your other children prior to making any decisions.

If I appoint an agent will I lose my ability to make my own decisions?

No. Your agent only gets to make healthcare decisions for you if your doctor and another doctor or licensed clinical psychologist examine you and determine you cannot make decisions for yourself. Furthermore, as soon as you can speak for yourself again, decision-making authority returns to you.

What if I change my mind?

You may cancel or modify your Advance Directive at any time, but it is important that you tell others that you have canceled or changed your Advance Directive.

What does it mean to have a terminal condition?

It means that your doctor has determined that you are likely to die soon or that you are in a

persistent vegetative state, which is when you have no awareness of your surroundings and your doctors have determined you will not recover.

What does life-prolonging treatment mean?

It means using machines, medicines, and other artificial means to help you breathe, eat, get fluids in your body, have a heartbeat, and otherwise stay alive when your body cannot do these things on its own. Life-prolonging treatment will not help you recover. It does not include drugs to keep you comfortable.

I do not want to limit my care if I have a terminal condition. Will an Advance Directive help me?

Yes. Your Advance Directive will enable your physicians and family to know that this is your wish.

I'm worried about pain, but I don't want to be hooked up to machines if I have a terminal condition. Should I have an Advance Directive?

Yes. No matter what you choose about life-prolonging treatment, you will be treated for pain and kept comfortable.

Will I get less respect and medical attention if I do not want to have life-prolonging treatment?

No. Your physicians and nurses may not discriminate against you based on your healthcare choices. You will get whatever care is appropriate, but you will not get any treatment that you have stated you do not want.

Can my spouse be one of my two witnesses? What about other blood relatives?

Yes, your husband/wife can be your witness. Other blood relatives can also be witnesses as long as they are adults.

Can my agent be a witness?

Yes, but to avoid the chance of conflict, it is better to have someone who is not your agent (or your alternate agent) be a witness.

Does an Advance Directive in Virginia need to be notarized?

No.

Are copies of Advance Directives valid?

Yes.

I have a financial Power of Attorney. Does It cover healthcare decisions?

Probably not. It is better to have a separate healthcare power of attorney document. If you are in doubt, consult a lawyer or ask at a hospital.

Can my family or physicians override my decisions if I am unable to speak for myself?

No. This is one of the major reasons to create an Advance Directive.

Will my Virginia Advance Directive be valid in other states?

It should be. Just as Virginia honors Advance Directives properly executed in other states, most states have similar rules to honor out-of-state Advance Directives. Nevertheless, if you spend a considerable amount of time in another state, you may want to have an Advance Directive executed for that state as well. You may also want to register your Advance Directive with an online registry, such as US Living Will Registry.

Where should I keep my Advance Directive? Who gets copies?

Just as important as creating an Advance Directive is making sure that other people know that you have it and know where it is located. Specifically, you should:

- Give a copy or the original to your agent or proxy.
- Give a copy to your physician(s).
- Give a copy to family and friends.
- Bring it to the hospital with you.
- Register a copy at Connect Virginia, and make sure your agent or proxy has access.
- Additionally, you should keep a copy of your Advance Directive in a safe place where it can be found easily. Do not keep your only copy in a lock box or safe.

Does it cost anything to create an advance directive?

No. Free forms are found on the web page.

Do I need a lawyer to draft an Advance Directive? Must I use these forms?

A lawyer is not required to draft a valid Advance Directive. There are free forms available at the links above, but a lawyer may help you if you have questions or complex healthcare needs. The free forms are also only models. You can use them or numerous other forms or no form at all. Just be sure that whatever you use includes: (1) your healthcare wishes, (2) your signature, and (3) the signatures of two adult witnesses.

What is a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order?

A DNR is a doctor's order saying that you will not get CPR, drugs, or electric shock to restart your heart or breathing if your heart stops or you stop breathing. A Durable Do Not Resuscitate Order (DDNR) is a special DNR order that your doctor can provide you so that EMS, fire, and rescue and any healthcare provider will know your wishes about resuscitation. Note: copies of DDNR forms are now valid in Virginia, and DDNR forms may be downloaded (to bring to your physician) at the Office of Emergency Medical Services website.

Can my Advance Directive provide organ donation wishes?

Yes. Your advance directive may provide organ donation and other anatomical gift wishes.

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

To all our nation's Veterans, thank you.

Mary Washington Healthcare Hospice Services has achieved Level II designation with We Honor Veterans, an innovative program developed by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This recognition includes collaborative efforts ensuring excellent care at the end of life is available for our nation's Veterans and their families.

If you know a Veteran who needs the special care hospice and palliative services bring to people facing serious and life-limiting illness, please reach out and help them learn more about the services that hospice and palliative care can provide.

Contact Mary Washington Hospice at 540.741.3580 or email hospiceinfo@mwhc.com to learn more about the ways we support our nation's heroes.





We are
COVID-19
prepared.

Mary Washington Hospice, Palliative & Grief Support Services is committed to providing up-to-date COVID-19 information to the community, along with Mary Washington Healthcare's response. We hope answers to these questions provide information about the protocols we have implemented to continue caring for and keeping patients, families, and staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are admitting hospice patients during COVID-19 pandemic.

Mary Washington Hospice continues to admit eligible patients to hospice care through the outbreak and are monitoring and adapting to the ever-changing situation.

We are conducting hospice patient in-home and facility visits.

We are continuing patient visits while closely following the information and recommendations from the **CDC and the Virginia Department of Health**, ensuring the best quality of care. We are utilizing **telemedicine visits** as well as providing phone and other forms of audio / visual support. We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our visit frequencies and methods of visits may be altered, depending on the mandates and protocols by which we are abiding.

We are providing hospice care for COVID-19 infected patients.

Our teams are trained and prepared to provide care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mary Washington Hospice supports our hospice-eligible patients regardless of diagnosis, acuity, or other circumstance. The safety of our patients and staff is extremely important to us.

We are conducting hospice in-person visits in long term care facilities.

We are conducting these visits in person wherever possible. Updated CMS guidance and their end-of-life exception enables Mary Washington Hospice Associates to visit and care for our patients in long-term care facilities. We are working with our facility partners to abide by their individual visitation requirements.

We are performing chaplain, grief counselor and social worker hospice virtual visits.

Mary Washington Hospice social workers, chaplains, and grief counselors are available during the pandemic. We are conducting virtual counseling sessions using various apps and phone calls to meet the needs of our patients and families.

Hospice Patient and Clinical Team Safety

Safety is our priority. In partnership with our healthcare organization, the CDC, and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) guidelines, we are assessing both Associates and patients with travel and symptom screening questionnaires. Telemedicine options are considered for visits, and all the necessary PPE is supplied for our Associates. We are committed to keeping our patients, families, and Associates safe.

Hospice Patient In-home Caregiver guidelines

During this time of increased uncertainty caregivers should follow the CDC recommended protocols for personal and patient hygiene:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after interacting with the patients.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid having unnecessary visitors in the home.
- Stay informed.
- Take care of yourself. Try to eat healthy meals and maintain a regular sleep routine.
- Make time for yourself, when possible and find opportunities to relax.
- Stay connected to loved ones.

Volunteering for Mary Washington Hospice During COVID-19

For our current volunteers, we have ways to serve from the comfort of their home. For new volunteers, we ask that you visit **Hospice.mwhc.com** and go to the Volunteer Opportunities and Ways to Give to complete an application.

Grief Support Services During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Mary Washington Hospice is providing individual bereavement counseling via phone during the crisis. If a patient needs grief services, please have them contact 540.741.1874.

Mary Washington Healthcare holds the safety of our patients, their families, our staff and our volunteers as a top priority. We closely follow information and recommendations from the CDC and the Virginia Department of Health to ensure we offer the best quality of care to the people we serve during this unprecedented time.

Please reach out to Mary Washington Hospice,
Palliative & Grief Support Services at **540.741.3580**
with questions or concerns.

Meet the Team

Paul McCarragher MSN, RN, CCRN, CHPN,
Clinical Manager, Hospice and Palliative Care



Paul was originally born in Wisconsin but moved to South Carolina when he was young and recently relocated to Fredericksburg. Taking an early interest in helping others, Paul attended Clemson University where he received his bachelor's and master's degree in nursing. After receiving his bachelor's degree, Paul took an interest in critically ill patients and began working as an ICU RN. While in school receiving his master's degree, he discovered a passion in palliative care and became interested in patient and family choice and making sure that seriously sick patients had the information to make informed decisions about their care going forward. Paul joined an inpatient palliative care team and worked closely with patients and families about discussing their care going forward, including hospice services.

Paul moved to Fredericksburg in December 2020 to begin work as the Clinical Manager for Hospice and Palliative Care at Mary Washington Hospice. He oversees the inpatient palliative care and hospice services at Mary Washington Healthcare and the outpatient palliative care and hospice services around the Fredericksburg area.



**Mary Washington
Healthcare**

Hospice, Palliative & Grief
Support Services

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

