

2013 Referrals and Patients Served Up; Length of Stay Down – Again

Mark M Murray, President & CEO

In 2013 Center for Hospice Care (CHC) had the highest annual percentage increase in patients served in the last four years. At 1,993, we cared for more patients than in any year in our 33-year history with a 7% increase over 2012. However, for our patients on census last year, it continues to be a case of more and more for shorter and shorter periods of time.

Average and median length of stay (ALOS) were both down for CHC hospice patients last year, continuing an ongoing trend that's replicated at most of the 5,500 hospice programs across the U.S. CHC's ALOS dropped to 70 days and the median fell to 13 days, down from 75 and 16 respectively for the prior year. Today, half of all CHC hospice patients die in two weeks or less.

During 2013, one in nine hospital referrals to CHC saw the patient expire before we could even get there to perform an assessment – and we usually arrive within hours. Of those who do survive long enough to be admitted to CHC, the ALOS of hospital referrals was just 19 days and the median was only six days. Hospitals accounted for 42% of our 2013 referrals. Medicare patients are entitled to receive hospice for at least six months as a point of entry.

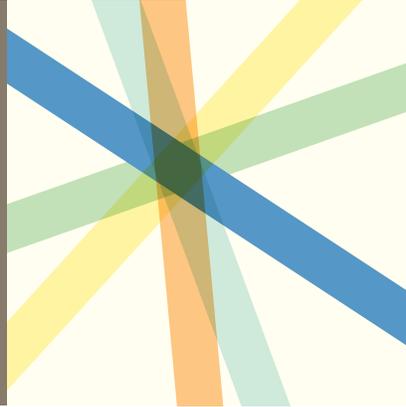
We understand that the "hospice talk" is a difficult conversation to have...for anyone. It's no secret some healthcare professionals will delay having it as long as possible. Some won't bring it up at all. Still, our local research consisting of interviews with over 300 residents in our service area each year continues to indicate that consumers expect their trusted healthcare professional to provide them with all the choices and information necessary to make an informed decision. Even the difficult ones.

It's clear to us that the benefits of hospice care become clouded when patients hear the word "hospice." Fear can be paralyzing. Physicians can help eliminate that fear by explaining that hospice improves the quality of life and dramatically reduces caregiver stress. If this is an area you're struggling with, we can help. We have "the talk" many times a day. Just call us for assistance.

Referrals to CHC totaled a record 2,717 in 2013. But where our referrals are coming from has changed over the last three years. Since we began a comprehensive public education campaign, referrals from the "Self and Family" category -- the public directly calling CHC -- has continued to increase year over year. Self/Family referrals in 2013 were up 50% from 2011. The fact that our community is taking matters into their own hands may be a good thing.

Some hopeful data comes from looking at lengths of stay from the Self/Family referrals. For patients and families who call us directly, meet eligibility requirements and become admitted to CHC, the ALOS in 2013 was nine days longer and the median seven days longer compared to referrals from all sources. Why does all this matter? While our surviving family satisfaction survey scores offer very high praise for CHC care, the most frequent complaint we receive continues to be "Why couldn't we get into hospice sooner?"

hospice & physician
team
newsletter



newsletter



Mark M Murray
President & CEO

"Today, half of all CHC hospice patients die in two weeks or less."



choices to make the most of life

Helping Adolescents Cope with Loss

Live Video Webcast hosted by Center for Hospice Care

Center for Hospice Care is hosting Hospice Foundation of America's 2014 Annual Living With Grief® Program, Helping Adolescents Cope with Loss. This year's program is moderated by Frank Sesno, Director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at The George Washington University.

This new program focuses exclusively on the issues that adolescents face as they cope with loss. Adolescence, broadly defined, from middle school years to emerging adulthood, is a significant developmental period during which adolescents form identity, independence, and intimacy. Illness and loss profoundly influences these processes. Moreover, adolescent encounters with loss are likely to be traumatic – deaths by accident, suicide, and homicide. This program explores the ways that healthcare workers, hospices, educators, social workers, counselors, clergy, funeral directors, and other professionals can assist adolescents as they cope with loss.

Mr. Sesno will lead the panel of noted authorities that includes: Tashel Bordere, PhD, MS, Associate Professor, Child and Family Development, University of Central

Missouri; Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv, Professor of Gerontology, The College of New Rochelle, and Senior Consultant, Hospice Foundation of America; Pamela Gabbay, MA, FT, Director, The Mourning Star Center for Grieving Children and Camp Director, Camp Erin Children's Bereavement Camp; Stacy F Orloff EdD, LCSW, ACHP-SW, Vice President, Palliative Care and Community Programs, Suncoast Hospice; Donna L. Schuurman, EdD, FT, Chief Executive Officer, The Dougy Center for Grieving Children Amy & Families; and Carol Wogrinn, PsyD, RN, Independent Consultant.

Three hours of Continuing Education credits are available for a wide range of professions. CEU details will be available at the presentation.

While the presentation is free, seating is limited and reservations are required. Please call Julie at 574-277-4100 to reserve your spot today.

Helping Adolescents Cope with Loss via Live Streaming Video Webcast

**Thursday, April 10, 2014
2:00 to 4:30 p.m.**

A local panel discussion will immediately follow with the program concluding at 5:00 p.m.

Center for Hospice Care
501 Comfort Place, Mishawaka

To learn more about this program visit the Hospice Foundation of America website at www.hospicefoundation.org. For more local information contact Amy Tribbett, Center for Hospice Care, 574-243-3711 or info@centerforhospice.org.



Johns Hopkins Dementia Caregivers Research Study Showing Beneficial Effect of Center for Hospice Care's Dementia Program

By Dr. Gregory C. Gifford, MD JD Chief Medical Officer
Diplomate ABEM; Board Certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine

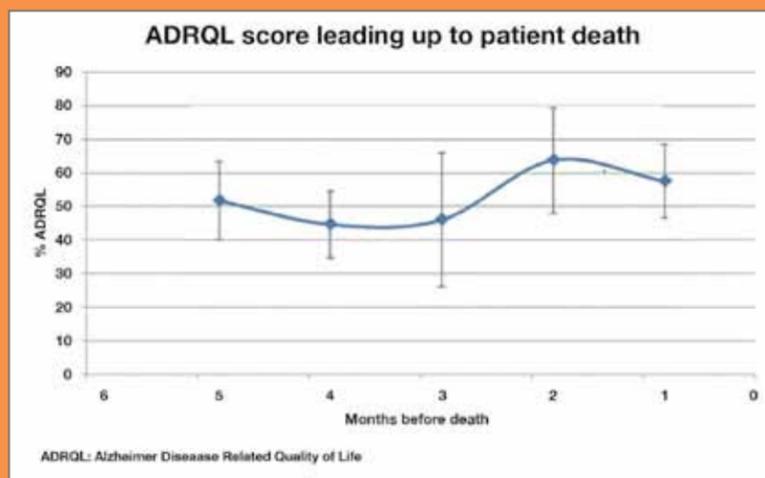


For the last 36 months Center for Hospice Care (CHC) has participated in the Johns Hopkins Dementia Caregivers Research Study, which was designed to measure the quality of life (QOL) of advanced dementia patients. Because the patients themselves were cognitively unable to participate in the study directly, their caregivers were interviewed in detail on either two or three occasions (depending on the longevity of the patients). This resulted in an indirect assessment of the patients' quality of life at the time of the interviews.

CHC used its participation in the Johns Hopkins study to also assess whether or not there were any changes in these QOL measurements in Hospice patients participating in our CHC Dementia Program. Categories studied were Response to Surroundings, Enjoyment of Activities, Feelings and Mood, Awareness of Self, and Social Interaction.

The CHC study revealed very interesting general changes as a result of the Dementia Program. On average, our Hospice dementia patients had significant increases in the scores for Response to Surrounding, Enjoyment of Activities, Feelings and Mood. There was a significant decrease in the scores

for Social Interaction, and there was no significant change in the scores for Awareness of Self. Overall, the summary scores for Quality of Life for the last five months of these terminal patient's lives showed a decline during the fifth month, then a gradual but persistent increase in QOL for the next two months, than decline again (expected) during the second month before their deaths.



Agency News

Center for Hospice Care and Mayo Clinic Sign Agreement

Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education of Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, has approved an inpatient hospice rotation with Center for Hospice Care. The Program Letter of Agreement between Mayo Clinic and CHC allows for Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellows to rotate for training through our agency. The first Fellow rotation begins in March 2014.

- CHC has signed a clinical affiliation agreement with Indiana University to provide clinical experiences for medical students enrolled in the University's Undergraduate Medical Education Program. Each of CHC's three fulltime medical directors was given an Associate Clinical Instructor status with the Indiana University School of Medicine.

- CHC continues its current and past practice of providing teaching experiences to Family Medicine Residents from both programs at Memorial Hospital and Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center. In the past year, 13 residents have had a teaching experience at CHC.

- CHC Medical Director, Amber Burger, MD, has been named Director of Palliative Care at Elkhart General Hospital. Dr. Burger will provide 10 hours a week for palliative care consultations.



Amber Burger, MD

- Terri Lawton, RN and Alice Wolff, RN both completed and passed the Hospice and Palliative Nurse Certification exam.

- Dee Aguayo, RN, BSN, MBA joined CHC as a community liaison, serving referral sources and community members in St. Joseph County. Dee's nursing, clinical, and business background, along with previous hospice experience at a large, national hospice provider. To schedule your staff in-services you can reach Dee via email at aguayod@centerforhospice.org or by phone, 547-360-5614.



Dee Aguayo, RN, BSN, MBA, Community Liaison

Did you know that CHC is an Education Destination?

Center for Hospice Care now has formal written agreements to provide education and training with the following educational organizations:

Physician Education

Mayo Clinic
Indiana University School of Medicine
Residency Programs of Memorial Hospital and SJRMC
Midwestern University (Glendale, AZ)

Nursing Education

Ball State
Bethel College
ITT Institute
Grace College
Saint Mary's College
Indiana Wesleyan
Indiana University South Bend

Social Work

Indiana University South Bend

Spiritual Care

Moreau Seminary

Health and Human Services

Western Michigan University

CHC also has non-written but collaborative educational affiliation arrangements and experiences with the following institutions in various discipline areas.

University of Notre Dame
Ball State University
Goshen College
Valparaiso University

Free Online Resources and Information on Hospice and Palliative Care

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) recently debuted ehospice-USA, an online resource for physicians, hospital discharge planners, and other health care professionals caring for patients and families facing serious and life-limiting illness. In addition to resources, news, commentary, and analysis, the site offers information on hospice and advance care planning that can be shared with patients and family caregivers.

"One of the most frequent comments we hear from the families we care for is that they wish they had known about hospice earlier," says J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD, NHPCO president and CEO. "Any professional caring for or supporting patients and families who may be appropriate for hospice will find useful information on ehospice-USA."

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS

Under the category Care and Practice, clinicians can find such articles as:

- "Delivering Bad News: Helpful Guidance That Also Helps the Patient"
- "Hospice Admission Criteria"
- "Talking about Treatment Options and Palliative Care: A Guide for Clinicians"
- "Advice for Physicians Caring for Dying Patients"

In one of the most-read articles, "Delivering Bad News," the authors remind clinicians that bad news can be "any information which is considered by the patient and/or family to be something other than information they desire." Examples can include news that the patient's medications are not effective or that a procedure is necessary. They recommend structured communication over impromptu discussions, and suggest that clinicians use a six-step protocol, which is provided in the article.

A section entitled "Pain at the End of Life" links readers to the NHPCO's patient support website, Caring Connections, where patients will find free, downloadable tip sheets on topics such as caring for a loved one in pain, understanding pain for improved quality of life, and commonly asked questions about pain at the end of life.





Center for
Hospice Care

choices to make the most of life

111 Sunnybrook Court
South Bend, IN 46637

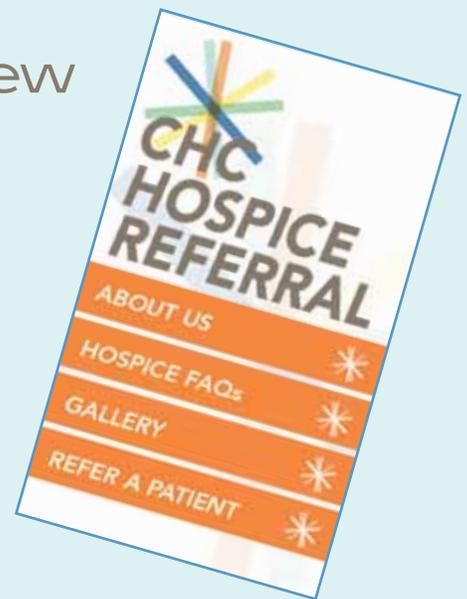
Referrals Coming in through New Hospice Referral App

Free app will streamline hospice patient diagnosis, referral and communication

Late in 2013, Center for Hospice Care launched its own HIPAA compliant Hospice Referral App. This app was created to streamline patient referrals to hospice care. Physicians, case managers, and nurses can all download this free app for use on mobile devices.

According to South Bend Clinic's Jesse Hsieh, MD "It worked great, was easy, and the rest of the staff used it. I give it an 'A.'" Rather than having to fax a written order, the CHC Hospice Referral App allows doctors to refer patients for care online wherever they are — whether visiting hospitalized patients or talking with families in the office. Use of the app will mean more efficient admissions, a smoother transition to hospice that maintains continuity of care, and more effective communication between physicians and Center for Hospice Care.

Versions are available by searching CHC Hospice at Google's Play Store for Android-based phones and tablets, and at the App Store for use on iPhones and iPads. For more information, or a demonstration of the CHC Hospice Referral App, please contact Amy Tribbett, Center for Hospice Care's Director of Marketing & Access at 574-243-3711 or info@centerforhospice.org.



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Jesse Hsieh, MD
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