



California Hospice Foundation



# CHOICES

*Empowering People*

Fall 2010

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## End-of Life Care Treatment Can Make A Difference in Quality of Life

A recent study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* has shown that end-of-life care treatment can make a tremendous difference in a patient's quality of life. A study of 151 patients with advanced lung cancer was divided into two groups; one group began receiving palliative care immediately upon diagnosis, the other did not, and the differences in their outcomes were striking. Patients receiving palliative care reported less pain, less depression, and more mobility. Although the palliative care patients frequently requested fewer aggressive treatments, they also lived nearly three months longer than patients receiving standard treatments.

The study received a great deal of media attention. The study was the topic on The Diane Rehm Show on NPR, and included guests Dr. Diane Meier, Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care and Dr. Atul Gawande, a staff member of Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and the *New Yorker* magazine. Dr. Gawande wrote a powerful piece about physicians and end-of-life decision making in a recent issue of the *New Yorker*.

This recent study is not the first to show a longevity benefit with hospice and palliative care. In 2007, a study of nearly 4,500 deceased Medicare beneficiaries showed that patients with common life-limiting conditions lived 29 days longer, on average, when they received hospice care.

*If you or anyone you know has a need for Hospice Information and Referral services please call the California Hospice Foundation's toll free number: 888-252-1010*

## CONTACT

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## A Note from the Board Chair

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Welcome to the Fall issue of *Choices!* This issue of *Choices* highlights important research that demonstrates the value of palliative care at the end of life, and we focus attention on the unique needs of caregivers. We hope that you find the information both informative and inspiring.

As revealed in past newsletters, our partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs is well underway. By the end of the year, we will have brought our message of the special needs of veterans at the end of life to hospice providers all around California and Nevada. Look forward to hearing more news in subsequent issues of *Choices*.

We are excited by what is happening in end-of-life care, and we are proud of our work in educating the community about the benefits of hospice. Within the pages of *Choices*, we hope to connect you directly with our mission and on behalf of the California Hospice Foundation board, I want to thank you for your support of our efforts. This newsletter is just one way for us to share information with people who care about Hospice and all it can bring to those facing the final phases of life. And it is through your involvement, support and generosity that the California Hospice Foundation fulfills its mission. Thank you.

*Sally Adelus,  
Chair, Board of Trustees*

## November is National Hospice Month

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November is National Hospice Month. During the month, we ask you to take a few moments to acknowledge the dedicated professionals and volunteers who provide compassionate, high quality care to individuals with a terminal illness. We also want to recognize everyone who supports Hospice through thought, word, and deed! All these efforts make our world a more loving and caring place.

*Thank You*



## Have You Put Off Making Or Updating Your Will?

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Do you have an estate plan? Maybe you think it costs too much to have a plan. Perhaps you are having a hard time deciding about how to leave your money, or you may simply not wish to confront your mortality.

One of the most rewarding and far-reaching actions you will ever take is to determine who will receive the gifts of your accumulated wealth. If you do not have a plan, your assets will definitely go somewhere, but not necessarily where you want them to go. In addition, if you do not take careful and specific actions, spouses and other heirs may receive your assets only after significant estate and income taxes are paid. Furthermore, you can only designate your favorite charities, like the California Hospice Foundation, if you have a will or other estate plan.

We ask that you consider helping us in our efforts to insure that everyone has a choice about where and how they die. Your gift to us through your will or estate plan is one of the easiest ways to guarantee that our services continue into the future.

## Resources for Estate Planning

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### **California State Bar Association**

[www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov)

866.44CALAW or 866.442.2529

Information on estate planning, a simple fill-in-the-blanks will, and a list of certified referral services to help you find a lawyer.

### **NOLO**

[www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com)

Click on "Wills, trusts and estate planning" for articles on various aspects of estate planning.

### **Law Help California**

[www.LawHelpCalifornia.org](http://www.LawHelpCalifornia.org)

Legal and referrals for low income Californians

### **360 Degrees of Financial Literacy**

by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

[www.360financialliteracy.org](http://www.360financialliteracy.org)

Click on "Retirement Planning" for information on estate planning, taxes and related topics

### **California Senior Legal Hotline**

[www.seniorlegalhotline.com](http://www.seniorlegalhotline.com)

800.222.1753

Free legal advice and assistance for seniors.



## Being the Caregiver

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Caregivers are all around us. More than 44.4 million Americans serve as informal caregivers to people aged 18 years and older who live in the community and require help. Spouses, adult children, other family members, partners, friends and neighbors all serve as unpaid, informal caregivers. Studies have shown that caregivers are all ages and come from all walks of life.

Many caregivers work fulltime outside the home and care for spouses and children as well as frail or ill family members. Caregiving presents considerable challenges—physical, emotional and economic. While many caregivers report feeling loved, appreciated and needed as a result of their caregiving, many also feel worried, frustrated, sad or depressed and overwhelmed. It is important to build a support system and seek help so you can take care of yourself as well.

### **Take breaks from caregiving**

Find ways to take breaks from caregiving. Studies have shown that caregiving for prolonged periods of time can adversely affect both your physical and psychological health. Many caregivers report that it is difficult to balance the needs of caring for older parents and other family members with

meeting their own personal needs. Seek out respite care to give yourself a break. Take breaks as often as you can. Take time everyday to engage in a relaxing activity. Read a book, rest, take a walk or exercise. Just be sure to schedule time for yourself away from your caregiving obligations. While it may seem selfish, taking regular breaks will help you “recharge” and be a better caregiver.

### **Take care of your own health and well-being**

Take medications and monitor your own health. Be sure to take time for regular exercise. Even a short walk daily can help you maintain your physical condition, reduce your risk for certain diseases and provide psychological benefit. Eat a sensible, healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables. Consider taking classes and engaging in stress-reduction techniques. Some find yoga, meditation and other relaxation techniques particularly helpful. Continue to participate in religious or spiritual activities, as well as recreational activities, sports, hobbies or simply spending time with friends.

It is important that you attend to your own health. Do not neglect your own health needs at the expense of caring for someone else. As a caregiver, you should make the following part of your routine: Get regular check-ups, and don't forget your flu shot.

### **Consider joining a support group**

More than 75% of caregivers report that isolation is their number one source of stress. Look for a local support group for caregivers, where you will be able to share feelings of isolation and frustration. Check the Internet for “self-help” and support groups. Many people find solace in sharing feelings and seeking emotional support from others who understand first-hand the challenges of caregiving.

## Thank You to Our Major Donors

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The California Hospice Foundation thanks the following individuals for their generous support. The levels are cumulative for 2010, and are based on new gifts since January 1, 2010.

### Humanitarian - \$5,000 and over

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Outcome Resources

Estate of Eileen Morrison

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## Donate Your Vehicle

Are you thinking of selling or trading in that unwanted car, truck, boat or RV?

Why not donate it to the California Hospice Foundation and receive a tax deduction? Your donation will be used to support the programs and services of the California Hospice Foundation. The vehicle donation program accepts most vehicles, running or not (exceptions include older vehicles when the value will not offset the cost of towing).

Donating is easy! Just find your title/pink slip and write down your VIN #. Then, call the California Hospice Foundation office at 888-252-1010. We fill out the forms and make arrangements with the Car Program to conveniently pick up your vehicle donation at no cost to you. Within 4 days one of their service representatives will contact you by phone and arrange the best time to pick up the vehicle. The Car Program will handle the title transfer requirements and provide you with a tax deductible donation receipt at the time of pickup.

Yes, I want to support the work of the California Hospice Foundation.

I enclose my donation of:

\$1000  \$500  \$100  \$50  \$25  other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my

VISA  MasterCard  American Express

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Complete and return to:** California Hospice Foundation,  
3841 North Freeway Boulevard, Suite 225, Sacramento CA 95834