



California Hospice Foundation



CHOICES

Empowering People

Winter 2011

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Second Year of the Veterans Care Project Wraps Up

On October 31, the California Hospice Foundation completed the second year of a three year project to improve care for veterans at the end of life. Year two of the grant saw the development and delivery of a two hour curriculum for hospice staff on the special end of life needs of veterans. The curriculum for the two hour training session was developed by a group of Veterans Administration and hospice staff. The workgroup included six community hospice providers from around California, and VA staff from Northern and Southern California. All staff served areas of California with large numbers of rural and/or homeless veterans in their community.

This program was presented to over 280 hospice staff in Modesto, Escondido, Orange, San Bernardino, Redding, Davis, San Jose and Marin. Overall evaluation of these programs indicated 69% of those attending rated the program a 6, on a 6 point scale, with an additional 23% giving an overall rating of 5. In addition, a full day program on the end of life needs of veterans was developed and delivered in Las Vegas to a group of 45 California and Nevada hospice providers.

In each program, individuals made heartfelt comments such as “I never knew how important it is to consider a patient’s experience as a veteran in his end of life care.” “Our agency asks if someone is a veteran, but I never understood what that meant until now.” We posted the two hour program on the California Hospice and Palliative Care Association website, as we have had numerous requests from those who attended to be able to use the program with their staff and colleagues.

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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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End of Life Care in the News

The media has been examining end of life issues in the last few months. The following are a few notes about programs and websites that may be of interest to our readership.

PBS's Frontline documentary, "Facing Death: How Far Would You Go to Sustain the Life of Someone You Love, or Your Own?" explores the choices physicians and terminal patients make between more, often painful, treatment, and less, which means a quicker death. The program, which originally aired on November 23, garnered wide media interest. The PBS link below has the full program in five video chapters, as well as interviews with the physicians in the film, guides to making decisions about various end-of-life issues, facts and figures about where and how we die and the costs of end-of-life care, related readings, and a list of resources for viewers. (PBS Website, www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/facing-death/)

On the website of the National Cancer Institute, the fact sheet on end-of-life care discusses when a caregiver needs to call for professional help, ways of providing emotional support to the patient, the signs of approaching death, tips to make the dying patient comfortable, signs that death has occurred, what needs to be done after the patient dies, and additional resources about end-of-life issues. (National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Support/end-of-life-care)

"A Final Cocoon: Dying at Home," in The New York Times, recounts the various ways that hospices and families help dying patients create places where they want to die, or to visit before they die. One man painted masks and mannequins which he used to decorate his room, while a husband built a Florida room for his estranged wife. A hospice created a Hawaiian beach, complete with warm sand, in a patient's bedroom. Another woman recreated her grandmother's vegetable garden, while still another wanted to camp out in her back yard so she could listen to the crickets. (The New York Times, 11/10, www.nytimes.com/2010/11/11/garden/11dying.html)

Dealing with the Holiday Blues

Many people view the holidays as a time of ritual and celebration. But for those who are experiencing illness, grief, or the loss of a loved one, the holidays can be a time of sadness, pain, anger, or dread. Grief can overwhelm us with memories and can magnify the stress that is already a part of the holiday season. How do we begin to cope?

The following tips might make dealing with the holidays easier.

Be Prepared

You don't want to be blindsided by the holidays. Try to have a plan. You don't have to stick to it if unexpected feelings come up. Decide ahead of time if you want to send holiday cards, make cookies, or decorate a tree.

Take Care of Yourself

Even though our society tends to discourage people from displaying grief, don't push yourself to be merrier than you are. Try to find quiet time, and do what feels best for you. Get the rest and nourishment you need. Don't take on any more than you can handle.

Ask for Help

Grief is exhausting. Recruit friends and family to take the children to holiday events or to help decorate your home. Requesting gifts of food can be as essential when grief resurfaces as it was when the loss first occurred.

Although a lot of people hesitate to share their feelings, sharing sadness and anger with others is the best way to process those feelings. Low-cost and no-cost support groups are available through many hospice programs, hospitals and churches. Online resources like the non-profit group Compassionate Friends (www.compassionatefriends.org) may be an alternative for people who'd otherwise suffer alone.

Consider Special Memory Projects

Especially with children, activities that renew the memory of a loved one can be healing. Make collages of photographs or just go through albums with family members. Write letters. Light candles. Craft special ornaments.

Make a Difference

The holiday season is a wonderful time to help others. Helping others can help take the focus off yourself and your pain. Volunteering at a nursing home, hospital, children's shelter, or soup kitchen can be cathartic in times of pain. Even helping a friend or family member in need can be healing.

Remember That You Will Make it Through the Holidays

As hard as it is for you right now, know you will make it through the holidays in one piece. It may be difficult, but it will pass. And when it does, you will come out on the other side stronger than before.





Elizabeth Edwards Dies Under Hospice Care

Elizabeth Edwards, long an advocate of hospice care, died on December 7. Her lengthy illness and death received extensive media coverage, and much of it referenced her passionate support for hospice. For that support, Edwards was named National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's 2009 Person of the Year.

Edwards, who at 61 still had two young children at home, continued her treatments until her physicians suggested it was time to stop. *MarketWatch* blogger Kristen Gerencher wrote of her, "Recent research suggests that starting palliative care early — at the time of diagnosis — can actually prolong life and not just increase its quality. That doesn't mean you have to give up on aggressive treatments, and it sounds like Elizabeth Edwards went that route as long as she could and as long as that made sense to her. Maybe her life and death will usher in a new era of frank talk about what end-of-life care can be when people have grown-up conversations about the trade-offs of various approaches."

Politics Daily's Eleanor Clift, herself an ardent champion of hospice since her husband's illness and death, said, "Their time in hospice, brief as it was, allowed the Edwards family — Elizabeth and John, and their grown daughter Cate — to re-visit old wounds along with the new ones that ended their marriage. Seeing a loved one on his or her death bed tends to focus the mind, and for Elizabeth, who was courageous and clear-eyed all along about the progress of her disease, hospice gave her and her estranged husband a chance to heal those wounds, forgive each other, and sort out what they want for their children, Emma Claire and Jack, who are very young." (*Politics Daily*, 12/7, www.politicsdaily.com/2010/12/07/elizabeth-edwards-and-her-final-days-in-hospice-care/; *MarketWatch*, 12/7, blogs.marketwatch.com/healthmatters/2010/12/07/legacy-of-elizabeth-edwards-includes-frank-talk-about-health/)

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 1-916-925-3770 or toll free at 1-888-252-1010. We fill out the forms and make arrangements with the Car Program to conveniently pick up your car 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.

Does Your Company Offer a Matching Gift Program?

Ask your Human Resources Department if they match employee gifts to charitable organizations. Fill out your employer's matching gift paperwork and send it to us with your donation. Many companies will match your gift up to 100%. The following lists a sampling of companies that offer a matching gift program.

AETNA Foundation	Genentech, Inc.
Amgen	Guident
Applied Materials	Intuit
Blue Shield of California	Newsweek
Business Wire	Nokia
Chubb & Son, Inc.	Sacramento Bee
Colgate-Palmolive Company	Sierra Health Foundation
eBay	Transamerica Systems
Emerson Electric Company	Waters Corporation
Exxon Mobile	

Second Year of the Veterans Care Project *continued from cover page...*

Plans for year three include the development of two training modules to be delivered via webinars on clinical topics of interest to the participants in the original series. In addition, in Orange County (Southern California) teams of VA and community providers are meeting to plan their own education of each other on a regular basis.

This grant of \$30,000 from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Association was leveraged with over \$44,600 in-kind contributions from those involved with the project. Congratulations to all for a successful year.

California Hospice Foundation



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Help Support The California Hospice Foundation

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: _____ CVS: _____

Complete and return to: California Hospice Foundation, 3841 North Freeway Boulevard, Suite 225, Sacramento CA 95834
CHF is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.