Palliative Care Offers More

Palliative Care. It’s an important part of what we do here at Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region. So important, in fact, that it’s part of our name. Yet so few people know what palliative care really is, or how to pronounce it (páll ee uh tive). Therefore, one of our on-going goals at HPCCR is to educate the communities we serve about the benefits of this oddly-named medical specialty. Some may know that palliative care touches on pain and symptom management. But it’s really much, much more.

When loved ones of a patient have their first palliative consultation, they are often unaware of how the disease, or diseases, affecting their family member will progress. Naturally, since they have been focused on day-to-day needs and activities, their emotional and mental ability to absorb complex medical information from multiple doctors may be limited. Palliative clinicians can gently and expertly explain complicated information and prepare the family for what will come.

The family of Mrs. P, a dementia patient whose symptoms are slowly progressing, met with our palliative team recently to discuss her disease and to report on how they are managing at home. Mrs. P’s husband described some different patterns of behaviors he’d noticed. The palliative team members listened carefully to his account and, because of their vast experience, were able to offer an educated prediction of symptoms he would most likely see soon. They also counseled him on important safety measures he would need to take (ones he had not yet considered) as his wife’s dementia becomes more severe.

During palliative care consultations, the MOST form (Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment) may be introduced. This medical document acts as a springboard for answering important questions about life-sustaining procedures (such as artificial nutrition, CPR, and life-prolonging antibiotics) within the context of family values and preferences. Many families have not yet considered these difficult questions, but answering them is crucial in determining how to maximize quality of life for a person who is declining.

Our palliative team vividly recalls a patient who had been hospitalized three or four times in the course of a couple of weeks. His daughter thought that every hospitalization had helped to improve his health, or at least make it consistently stable. She didn’t realize that her father had been declining steadily and that his inability to breathe was associated with his history of heart disease. Because he had a pacemaker, she assumed his heart was fine. Going through the questions on the MOST form was eye-opening for the daughter; they forced her to really look at her father and to consider what the hospitalizations actually meant. Those separate episodes, taken together, created a far different picture of the state of her father’s health than she had previously understood. She then realized it was time to make decisions based on his wishes, not hers.

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In March, Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region commemorated its 37th year of service to our community. Looking at our organization today, it’s hard to believe how much we’ve grown. Since our very first patient was admitted, we have cared for over 40,000 individuals under our hospice program. And we’ve cared for thousands more under our palliative program since its inception as well.

Throughout the years, our goal has not changed. We want to care for anyone who needs our exceptional care at end of life. And we are pleased to announce that the reach of our services has recently expanded. We now accept patients in three counties in South Carolina – Chester, Lancaster, and York. We admitted our very first SC patient in August last year and in January of this year, we were awarded full accreditation for three years by the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC).

We’ve learned over the years that education is a key component of furthering our mission. Helping our community understand the benefits of hospice and palliative care will go a long way toward reducing the fear that can often exist in the final phase of life. That’s why we chose to highlight our palliative care program in this issue. We work with families every day who are happily surprised to have some of their anxieties relieved and their quality of life restored. We want everyone to know that they can expect our very best care. That, ultimately, end of life can be both honorable and peaceful.

Expect Our Best

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(Palliative Care Offers More, continued from page 1)

One of the most concrete benefits of the palliative team’s expertise is that they are able to help families understand when the time is right to transition to hospice care. When caregivers are with their loved one every day, they sometimes fail to recognize the signs of decline. Many small symptoms, taken together, can actually signify a more serious weakening of health. Palliative clinicians help the family to understand the signs and to know when they need extra support.

When the family of Mrs. S, a dementia patient, came in for a scheduled consultation, our palliative team recognized immediately that Mrs. S had declined significantly since they’d last seen her. And while her family knew she had changed, they didn’t realize that hospice was now the appropriate course of action. The palliative clinicians gently introduced the concept and explained in detail the extra services they would receive once Mrs. S was under hospice care. The palliative team answered every question and helped them understand what the physical symptoms meant within the progression of dementia. At the beginning of the meeting, the family was in tears at the concept of hospice. By the time they left, they were distinctly relieved that hospice would be coming to help.

Ultimately, palliative care is about quality of life. It’s about awareness and education. It’s about listening to the needs of our patients and families and helping them to properly plan for the future they want. And it is a privilege every day to do so.
New Physicians at HPCCR

Dr. John Clark, Jr. earned his B.S. from Davidson College and his medical degree from Vanderbilt University. He completed his internship at Vanderbilt University Hospital and his residencies at Vanderbilt University Hospital and Cincinnati General Hospital. He is board certified in Emergency Medicine and has most recently worked as an attending physician in the Presbyterian Hospital Emergency Room in Charlotte. Dr. Clark joined HPCCR in 2015.

Dr. Mrinalini Joshi earned her Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Grant Medical College, University of Mumbai in India. She completed her internship in India and her residency at the University of Iowa. She is certified in both Hospice and Palliative Medicine and Family Medicine. Along with working with HPCCR, Dr. Joshi is a clinical instructor of Palliative Medicine at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston Salem, NC.

In Memoriam: Dr. William Jacobs

In December, we lost a beloved member of our clinical team at Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region. Dr. William “Jake” Jacobs had been a physician with us for three years when he passed away.

“Dr. Jake” was beloved by all who knew him. He practiced for 30 years at Charlotte Plastic Surgery and particularly enjoyed teaching residents and fellows as a clinical professor of surgery. Dr. Jake’s compassionate nature led him on several medical mission trips, including Costa Rica, Sierra Leone, and Haiti. He was an Eagle Scout and former scout master, an avid reader, a fly fisher, and an enthusiastic worldwide traveler.

Dr. Jake joined Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region in 2011. His keen sense of humor and unique ability to connect with others gave him a reputation as an outstanding physician, a good friend, and a bright light in difficult times. He will be truly missed by his HPCCR family.

New Board Member

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region elected one new director to its board at the annual meeting on March 23. A warm welcome goes to William Webb, Executive Director of Charlotte Sports. We offer our sincere thanks to two directors, Keith Butler and Judy Wax, whose terms have ended. Their contributions to our organization have been truly appreciated.

HPCCR Board member William Webb (r) and HPCCR CEO Pete Brunnick
Join Us for These Upcoming Events!

Save the date for the following events and visit hpccr.org for details. Please contact Nancy Cole at cohen@hpccr.org or 704.335.4312 for registration information.

**The 15th Regatta Party**  
Saturday, May 2, 6:30-11pm  
The Peninsula Club  
11901 Peninsula Club Drive, Cornelius  
Open to all, reservations required.

**Hops for Hospice**  
Saturday, May 16, 1-4pm  
Foxcroft Wine Co.  
7824 Fairview Road, Charlotte  
*Taste the flavors of local breweries!*

**15th Lake Norman Hospice Regatta**  
Friday - Saturday, May 29-31  
Sails from Lake Norman Yacht Club  
297 Yacht Road, Mooresville  
*Open to competitive and non-competitive sailors!*

**7th Pedal the Park**  
Monday, September 7, 9am  
Ride will begin and end at Levine & Dickson Hospice House - Huntersville  
11900 Vans Story Drive, Huntersville

**Hit The Brixx 10K/5K Run-Walk**  
for Kids Path® Pediatric Hospice Care  
Saturday, September 12, 7:45am  
Brixx Wood Fired Pizza - Uptown  
225 East Sixth Street, Charlotte

**Shoot for Joy**  
Saturday, September 19, 8am  
Kidd Farm, 5900 Stephens Rd., Huntersville  
Memorial sporting clay shoot  
*All skill levels of shooters welcomed.*

**Taste of Birkdale**  
Saturday, September 19, 3-7pm  
Birkdale Village Shopping Center  
Huntersville

**11th Plaza Midwood Chantilly Chili Cook-Off**  
Saturday, October 10, 12-6pm  
MMR Racing  
1318-D Central Avenue, Charlotte  
(Corner of Central Ave. and Pecan Ave.)

**11th Dennis Lowery Memorial Golf Tournament**  
Monday, October 12, 10am Tee-off  
Pine Lake Country Club  
Open to competitive and non-competitive golfers!

**16th Empty Bowl - Pottery, soups, and desserts!**  
Tuesday, October 13, 5-7pm  
Rising Sun Pottery  
209 South Academy Street, Lincolnton

**16th Annual Chameleon’s Journey**  
Saturday & Sunday, October 17 &18  
Camp Thunderbird, Lake Wylie, SC  
Overnight camp for grieving youth  
Contact 704.335.4334 for more information.

**Corks & Karats**  
Saturday, November 14, 6:30pm  
Carmel Country Club  
4735 Carmel Road, Charlotte  
Open to all, reservations required.

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Join us for our signature gala event in south Charlotte on Saturday, November 14. You'll enjoy delicious wines, excellent food, live music, and bidding on fabulous auction items. Tickets are available for purchase on our website (hpccr.org) under Shop HPCCR.

**Corks & Karats**  
Saturday, November 14, 6:30pm  
Carmel Country Club  
4735 Carmel Road, Charlotte  
Open to all, reservations required.

HPCCR Board member Jeff Gore twirls a Corks & Karats guest, Becky Guenther, around the dance floor, enjoying the live music.
Join our Promise Circle

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region has a special new group of friends, and you are invited to join us! The Promise Circle is a community of hospice supporters who sign up for automatic monthly donations with a credit or debit card.

Your monthly gift provides HPCCR a steady and cost-effective source of income. Because we will process your monthly donation automatically, you help us reduce our costs by eliminating unnecessary appeals and requests — giving you one less thing to worry about and allowing us to fund more programs and serve more families in our community.

By joining the Promise Circle, your donation goes directly to support the programs of HPCCR, securely and conveniently.

Please return the attached envelope to become a member of the HPCCR Promise Circle.

Thank you for your friendship to Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region, and for caring that others have access to our compassionate, expert care where they need us, and when they need us.

Need more information? Contact Pam Janowicz Gray, CFRE, grayp@hpccr.org or call 704.335.4324.

Using our Gifts

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region received a very welcome surprise when we learned that we had been included in the will of painter William “Bill” Ward. It was surprising because HPCCR did not care for him when he died. But his generous gesture let us know that someone he loved dearly was under the care of hospice. And it clearly made an impact.

Bill never married nor had children. But he had a very close relationship to his grandniece, Mary Frances Lawing, because of their joint love of art. Bill taught art and was a prolific painter, even though he never had an art show or sold his creations. But he constantly practiced, taking inspiration from some of his favorite artists – Matisse, Picasso, and other post-impressionist painters.

When Bill died, he left all of his tangible property to Mary and dictated that, once liquidated, the proceeds should be donated to HPCCR. Bill had painted hundreds of pieces in various mediums – oils, acrylics, pastels, and watercolors. He had also crafted some sculptures and even built several pieces of furniture.

Bill originally came to Charlotte at the request of his sister Edith (Mary’s grandmother) and he lived with her until she passed away in 1993. Edith was cared for by Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region, and Bill was deeply touched by the experience; he was especially moved by the compassion the care team showed his sister. It is our honor to use Bill’s gift to continue providing exceptional care to everyone we touch.

William Ward, generous supporter of HPCCR
Now Serving South Carolina

Hospice & Palliative Care Palmetto Region (HPCPR) is officially open for business! Located in Fort Mill, SC, our newest location began serving patients in Chester, Lancaster, and York counties in August 2014. Since that time, HPCPR has been awarded full accreditation for three years by the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC). We are so pleased to expand our reach and bring our exceptional care to South Carolina! To contact our new office, please call 803.548.3708.

Our HPCPR team showed their community support by participating in an Alzheimer's Walk in Rock Hill, SC.

Hospice Cares For All

When we picture hospice patients, we often think of men and women who are our grandparents' age. They typically have a prognosis of six months or less and are no longer seeking curative treatment. But this is not what our hospice patients always look like. Six-year old Lincolnton patient Brooklyn Cockerline is a perfect example.

Typical six-year olds would be running around the house, talking non-stop and getting into everything. Unfortunately, Brooklyn can’t walk or talk, but she smiles with pure joy. She has congenital CMV (cytomegalovirus infection), which in unborn children keeps the baby's brain from developing fully and leads to seizures, low birth weight, hearing loss, and vision impairment.

Brooklyn has not had it easy. She’s had seizures throughout her short life which have caused untold damage to her brain and nervous system. She gets sick extremely easily and is always at a high risk for a hospital stay. Fortunately, Brooklyn has a wonderful physician who, two years ago, asked Brooklyn's parents a simple but life-changing question, “Have you thought about hospice care?”

To any parent, it's a completely terrifying question. But hospice care for children, for the most part, is different than hospice for adults. It is typically harder to know what path an illness might take in a child and prognosis is much more difficult. Brooklyn's doctor was talking about Kids Path®, the pediatric program of Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region (HPCCR) that provides care to children who are living with a serious illness or condition. Kids Path offers physical, emotional, and spiritual care to children and their families, enhancing their quality of life. For most of the children in this program, their illness continues for much longer than the typical six months that is generally associated with hospice care.

In Brooklyn's case, her Kids Path team consists of a physician, nurse, and social worker who work alongside her primary care physician to handle her every need. She also has access to a chaplain, an in-home aide, and a volunteer.

Brooklyn and her family remind us that life is meant to be lived with joy; that with the exceptional care end-of-life services provide, anyone – young or old – with limited life expectancy can make every day count.

Kids Path is a program of Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region. For more information, call 704.735.0100 or visit hpccr.org.
The Gift of Decisions

April 16 was National Healthcare Decisions Day, a day when we acknowledge the importance of asking ourselves some serious questions. Who would you want making important decisions about your health if you couldn’t speak for yourself? What decisions would you want that person to make? Do those closest to you know how you feel about life-sustaining procedures?

Less than one-third of adults have advance directives. Which means that more than two-thirds of our population are leaving their loved ones unaware of their wishes should something unplanned happen to them. Advance directives give family and friends peace of mind in the event that the hypothetical becomes reality. Making the hard decisions now for ourselves will ultimately be a gift to those who love us.

HPCCR participated in National Healthcare Decisions Day by offering educational seminars throughout our eleven-county service area. But even though National Healthcare Decisions Day has passed, our Education & Resource Managers are always available to offer presentations to your civic or community organization or to your faith community. Call us at 704.375.0100 or visit hpccr.org for more information.

Tucking into the Weekend

When you were a child, was there anything that made you feel more loved and safe than being tucked into your bed by your parents at night? At HPCCR, we wanted our patients to have that safe, comfortable feeling too. So we did something about it.

A few months ago, we started something new that we are calling the Tuck In program. We are not physically tucking our patients in at night, but we ARE calling them before the weekend rolls around to make sure they have everything they need. Supplies? Check! Medications? Check! Any other concerns we need to be aware of?

We have a group of volunteers who meet at our office and make these phone calls each Thursday morning. Our volunteers either talk to the patients themselves or to a caregiver. If there are needs or concerns, the volunteer then notifies a nurse who can coordinate any care needed.

Being customer-focused is extremely important to us. Our patients are fragile and their comfort is our utmost concern. The Tuck In program is just one more way to stay connected to the individuals who depend on us for their care.

It’s a new program so it hasn’t been rolled out yet to all of our home care patients, but it soon will be. We just need to recruit the right number of volunteers to help us cover everyone and make sure we’ve got a call station prepared. But the response we’ve received so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Our patients appreciate the extra touch of concern and their caregivers like the reminder that we are only a phone call away.

Hospice patients are always going to have some fears about the future. It’s nice to know, then, that we have the ability to provide comfort and peace of mind, especially before the weekend — a time often considered “off the clock” in the health care world. But just like parents never ignore the fears of their children at bedtime, HPCCR is never off the clock when it comes to our patients. We will always offer an extra touch and loving care. And, from now on, a tuck in will be included.

If you are interested in volunteering for this program, please give us a call at 704.375.0100 and ask to speak to someone in our Volunteer department. A nursing background is helpful, but certainly not required, for our Tuck In volunteers.
Help Us Go Green!
To receive a newsletter electronically, visit hpccr.org and subscribe on our homepage.

If you are receiving multiple copies, or no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact Maribeth Burke at 704.335.4323 or burkema@hpccr.org.

Have you included a gift to HPCCR in your will – or would like more information about doing so?

Please contact Pam Janowicz Gray, 704.335.4324, grayp@hpccr.org. We have helpful materials on estate planning and locating important documents.

If you are interested in gathering more information at our annual Hospice Legacy Society reception in the fall, just let us know!

The artist William Ward as a young man