



# CARONDELET

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## HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

### *Hospice News*

Spring 2010

A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Volume 4, Issue 1

### **A Day in the life of a Hospice Nurse**

Hospice nurses perform many traditional nursing duties such as observing, assessing, and recording symptoms, and they still work closely with physicians, administer medications, and provide emotional support. Hospice nurses have a particularly tough job because, from the outset, they know that the patient for whom they are caring is terminally ill.

The medications that hospice nurses administer and the symptoms they record aren't intended to aid a patient in his or her recovery, but rather to make his or her remaining days as comfortable as possible. Most of the nurse's duties involve minimizing pain. Although being a nurse of any kind is very difficult, dealing every day with a dying person requires an exceptional temperament, one that embodies great caring, patience, and resolve.

Hospice care is what is known as comprehensive palliative medical care, i.e., treatment to reduce pain and other troubling symptoms as opposed to treatment to cure. The hospice doctrine states that terminally ill patients have the right to spend their last days in the comfort of their own homes, with their families, and hospice care provides professional medical care as well as supportive social, emotional, and spiritual services to accomplish this. The hospice nurse's duties fall somewhere in between all of these ideals, with emphasis on medical care. Because they essentially act as home-care nurses and spend several hours a day with their patients in their homes, they become emotional caretakers as well.

The majority of hospice patients have cancer, but others suffer from AIDS, Lou Gehrig's disease, heart or lung disease, and other terminal conditions. Patients can be any age, race, or creed, and it can be especially trying on hospice nurses to attend patients who are as young, or younger, than they are. Hospice nurses coordinate the care of every hospice patient through an attending physician, provide direct patient care, evaluate the patients' conditions, and serve as the liaison between families and physicians.

Reference: Princeton Review

*It's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

### ***Save The Date!***

***March 3rd***– Power over Parkinson's Conference

***March 10th***– Green Valley Health Fair

***March 13th***– Carondelet Health Network & Diocese of Tucson Caregivers Conference– TCC. \$10, free parking.

***April 24th***– 7th Annual Stroke Check– St. Joseph's Hospital & St. Mary's Hospital 7am-1pm. Free.

### ***New Staff***

Please extend a warm welcome to our newest staff members!

Leah Carter, RN

Tabitha Gordon, Receptionist Inpatient Unit

Patricia Isler, Receptionist Administrative Office

Michelle Ruttinger, Social Worker

Hospice Inquiries  
Admissions and Patient Support  
(520) 205-7700

Charitable Gifts  
Carondelet Foundation  
(520) 873-5000

Events  
(520) 205-7557

In-Patient Unit  
(520) 205-7700

## FAMILY CORNER

~Letter From Our Director~

**Greetings:**

**In March of 2010, we will be celebrating our 33rd anniversary of caring for Southern Arizona!**

**Looking back I remember the very first patient we admitted to the hospice program. He and his family took a great leap of faith in entering the hospice program which was little understood in the US at the time. He led the way for thousands of patients and their families who have been supported by Carondelet Hospice & Palliative care since 1977.**

**Thirty-three years later much has changed. In 2008 approximately 1.45 million patients received services from hospice nationally.**

**I feel privileged to have been a part of the hospice movement over the past 33 years. It is an honor to work side by side with compassionate and committed professionals and volunteers. They work so hard to ensure that our patients experience a peaceful and loving passage to the next life and help their families through the grieving process.**

**Bonnie Knobloch,  
Executive Director**

### I'M A HOSPICE NURSE, THAT'S WHAT I DO

I got a call from the physician a few weeks ago. He told me of a woman he knew. He said he had done everything he could do, and she needed Hospice care. So I planned to see her. I'm a Hospice Nurse, that's what I do.

We scheduled an appointment and I did her admission paperwork. I found out what was wrong, what she had been through, and where she was now. They had questions, I had a few answers. I made a commitment to help. I'm a Hospice Nurse, that's what I do.

I began her care. We decided what her priorities were, what her family needed. And I began to talk, and to teach. I talked about her disease process, her medicines and her expected changes. And to learn: learn about her life, her needs, her delights and her fears. I'm a hospice Nurse, that's one of the things I do.

At first her problems were few and our visits infrequent. But her condition changed and her dependence on care grew. Her pain increased, her needs intensified, I would call her doctor to request medicine changes, get mouth swabs and pursue comfort. I'm a Hospice Nurse, that's what a Hospice Nurse does.

As her need for sleep increased, I spend more time with her family. We discussed turning schedules, appetite, visitors and death. I smiled when he talked about who she was, we cried when he realized who she was becoming. I would sit quietly, words weren't necessary. I'm a Hospice Nurse, sometimes that's what nurses do.

Yesterday the call came in. She's gone, he said. It didn't take me long to get there- the miles were short. The minutes eternally long. Silent tears, gentle touches. A long black car, the sound of a shut door. I'm a Hospice Nurse, that's part of what I do.

Did I help? I don't know. I wanted to. I wanted to ease suffering. I wanted to help her find everlasting peace. I wanted to help the family with their grief. I prayed for peace for the patient, Mercy for the family and guidance so that I might say the right things. Sometimes I would cry when I left her house. Their pain was so great, the suffering so overwhelming. And I would always wonder what else I could do. I wanted to make a difference. I tried to make a difference. That's what all Hospice Nurses do.

Regina G. Lanier, RN, Hospice Nurse

Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care partner with Tucson Electric Power to provide gifts to our families in need during the Christmas Season~ Thank you to all of the volunteers and donations that make this annual event so wonderful!

*From L/R- Ron Runion, Frank Grijalva, Jimmy Gonzales & Curt Brooks*



# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## The Resilient Caregiver: Embracing the Spiritual Journey

Saturday, March 13, 2010 ■ 8:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m. ■ Tucson Convention Center

Presented by



Catholic  
Diocese  
of Tucson

For more information, please go to [www.carondelet.org](http://www.carondelet.org) or call  
Mary Louise Luna, Caregivers' Conference Coordinator at (520) 873-5006

### History of Hospice

The word "hospice" stems from the Latin word "hospitium" meaning guesthouse. It was originally used to describe a place of shelter for wary and sick travelers returning from religious pilgrimages. During the 1960's, Dr. Cicely Saunders, a British physician began the modern hospice movement by establishing St. Christopher's Hospice near London. St. Christopher's organized a team approach to professional caregiving, and was the first program to use modern pain management techniques to compassionately care for the dying. Carondelet Hospice was established in 1977, as the first hospice in Arizona.

### Presentations offered by Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care

#### Hospice 101

What is Hospice? How Does Hospice Work? Who is the Hospice Team? What Services Does the Hospice Team Provide? How is Hospice Paid For? Why Choose Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care?

#### Advance Directives

Advance health care directives are instructions given by individuals specifying what actions should be taken for their health in the event that they are no longer able to make decisions due to illness or incapacity. We offer Living Wills, Healthcare Power of Attorney, & Mental Healthcare Power of Attorney. \*\*All forms are also available in Spanish.

#### Five Wishes

Five Wishes is the first living will that talks about your personal, emotional and spiritual needs as well as your medical wishes. It lets you choose the person you want to make healthcare decisions for you if you are not able to make them for yourself.

#### Walking In-services for the Healthcare Workplace

Provide topic specific information for healthcare staff members without taking up your time. Liaison's walk from staff member to staff member with handouts specifically targeting your requested hospice educational needs.

Speaking requests can be directed to Tara Norris, Marketing/Outreach (520) 205-7557

Hospice News® is published by Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care 630 N. Alvernon Way, Suite 361, Tucson, AZ 85711. Questions or comments, email [tnorris@carondelet.org](mailto:tnorris@carondelet.org)

### When to Consider

#### Hospice Care

- The patient has sought treatment in an emergency room or been hospitalized for disease-related episode twice in the past year
- The physician is receiving an increased number of calls and requests from family caregivers
- Family members appear to be overburdened with or fatigued by caregiving
- After hospitalization, the patient cannot return home and is admitted to a nursing facility
- The patient has had a weight loss of 10% or more in the past six months
- The patient's appetite has been steadily declining, unrelated to any other medical condition

**To initiate a hospice consultation or for more information about Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care, please call 205-7700**



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## HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

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Tucson, Arizona 85711

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If you would like to  
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[tnorris@carondelet.org](mailto:tnorris@carondelet.org)



**The Gift that “Gives Back”**  
Gifts are used to advance the mission of Carondelet Health Network, to help purchase equipment, enhance facilities, expand services, fund staff education and to reach out to meet the health care needs of our communities throughout Southern Arizona.

You can also give by visiting the Carondelet Foundation Website at:  
[www.carondelet.org/foundation](http://www.carondelet.org/foundation)

**Yes**, I would like to make a gift to Carondelet Foundation to support the mission of Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care.

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Mail this form to: Carondelet Foundation 120 N. Tucson Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85716