

# Hosparus Health Expands Services to Help Those Living with Serious Illness Get the Help They Need

Every day, 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 years old, and up to 85 percent of them are living with at least one serious illness. That translates to millions of adults living with chronic diseases that may shorten their life expectancy and dramatically impact their quality of life. Many patients are caught in the revolving door of emergency rooms and doctors' offices, incurring millions of dollars in unnecessary costs, and creating needless stress for both patients and their family caregivers.

As the hospice and palliative care provider of choice for families in Bowling Green, we know from years of experience there's a better way. Hosparus

**... the time is now...  
for whole-person,  
advanced illness care...  
supportive care that  
helps people make the  
most out of each day.**

Health has been providing compassionate care for patients and families facing serious illness wherever they call home for the past 40 years. We are one of the top 20 nonprofit hospice and palliative organizations in the nation, serving 7,600 patients and their families each year.

The rapid growth of the aging population means demand for our services continues to grow. Not only that, but more and more people are taking back control of their care, demanding to live better, longer — right up until the very end. Hosparus Health is committed to helping the seriously ill stay out the hospital and enjoy optimal living for as long as possible.

## **A new way to get the services you need**

Last year, we shared about our expansion beyond traditional hospice care to include a new palliative care program, also called advanced illness care. Unlike hospice care, which is limited to the last six months of life, palliative care can be provided at any time. Our expert care teams work with a patient's regular doctor to customize and coordinate their plan of care.

Now, with our newest service enhancement, we're making it easier than ever for patients and families to get the supportive care they need to make the most out of each day.

In our NP/MD Specialty Visit Program, a board-certified physician or nurse practitioner provides a consultative visit that is designed to optimize quality of life by anticipating, treating and even preventing disease symptoms to

minimize suffering. Anyone experiencing the symptoms, stress and uncertainty of serious illness could benefit.

Like our full-service palliative care program, this type of supportive care is available at any stage of illness and can be provided together with curative treatment. Common diagnoses might include COPD, congestive heart failure, cancer, dementia, diabetes and neurologic conditions such as MS or ALS.

Our physicians and nurse practitioners

have expertise in symptom management, advance care planning and care coordination, and they'll help develop individualized care plans that align with a patient's goals and values. They

will provide recommendations regarding pain, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, loss of appetite, and other troubling symptoms related to serious illness. Just like with our hospice and palliative services, the goal in this new program is to provide the best possible quality of life for patients and their families for as long as possible.

## **The earlier you call, the more we can help**

Hosparus Health is proud to lead the charge to change the face of care for serious illness. Both our palliative care services and NP/MD Specialty Visits are fee-for-service programs designed to provide an extra layer of coordinated support for patients and families that insurance does not cover. Our hope is that by investing in these programs and documenting successful outcomes, we will encourage passage of a new Medicare insurance benefit. In the meantime, our nonprofit mission enables us to offer them to any Bowling Green patients who could benefit, regardless of their financial situation.

Healthcare experts and advocates agree that the time is now to move toward a model of whole-person, advanced illness care navigation that helps people make the most of not just their final days, but their final weeks, months and even years.

We're doing just that, right in your backyard. You can count on Hosparus Health to help you shine as long and as bright as you can.



## **Palliative care gets 87-year-old back in her garden**

Without Hosparus Health, Norma Niehaus says she might not still be here.

At 87 years old, she has multiple health challenges, including osteoarthritis, hypothyroidism and chronic kidney disease. In October 2016, she was in such discomfort that she feared she could no longer manage her illnesses at home.

"When I first called, it was out of desperation," says Norma. "I couldn't stand up straight, I couldn't take a shower, I couldn't sleep in my bed. I was a mess."

Soon after calling Hosparus Health for help with symptom and medication management, her condition improved dramatically. "I've been doing so well ever since," she says. "I did not want to go to a nursing home, and they understand that. I want to stay in my home, period. This makes that possible for me."

Norma's nurse, Holly, "runs interference" for her, she says, by coordinating with her regular doctor. Holly also was instrumental in getting Norma connected to a physical therapist, which has helped her mobility.

"I have such peace of mind knowing I can call her at any time," says Norma.

Norma also meets with a social worker who has provided information on available resources, and helped her complete documents for her advance directives. That advice and guidance has been especially valuable to her, Norma says, because her adult children do not live nearby.

Now that she's feeling so much better, she says, "I want to make every day as much fun as I can." And she is doing just that. She is particularly happy to report that Hosparus Health's palliative care program has gotten her healthy enough to work in her garden again, which is one of her passions.

"It's a terrific program. I highly recommend it."