

Molly's Column

FROM THE DESK OF DR. MOLLY BOURNE, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



I reached out to a woman today, a month after her brother's death. Now that he was buried and the service was over, she felt she finally had time to grieve.

She told me his cancer had been a surprise to everyone and the chemotherapy had not done what they wanted it to do. He was only in his fifties. A week before he enrolled in hospice, she described her brother curled in the fetal position in the waiting room of his doctor's office. The doctor took one look at him and recognized he needed more than could be done in the office. Off her brother went to the hospital where he was poked and prodded; only to find out the treatments weren't working.

He came home and chose Hospice by the Bay, dying four days later in his own bed amongst friends and family. I offered our bereavement services which allow surviving loved ones the chance to process grief with counselors specifically trained to help with this kind of loss. She agreed that would be helpful, but admitted the majority of her grief was avoided knowing that he died at home with the people he loved. If he had to die, she said, then she was grateful something like hospice existed. Her brother would not have wanted anything else.

A Gift in Your Will or Living Trust

A simple, flexible and versatile way to ensure we can continue our work for years to come, is a gift in your will or living trust, known as a **charitable bequest**.

When planning a future gift, it's sometimes difficult to determine what size donation will make sense. Emergencies happen, and you need to make sure your family is financially secure first. A bequest offers many benefits:

-  **It's revocable** – You stay in control of your gift. You can easily revise the bequest if your circumstances change.
-  **Versatility** – You can structure the bequest to leave a specific item or amount of money, or leave a percentage of your estate to us.
-  **Tax Relief** – If your estate is subject to estate tax, your gift is entitled to an estate tax charitable deduction for the gift's full value.

For more information about bequests and other types of gifts, please visit our extensive Planned Gifts resource center on our website, www.hospicebythebay.org

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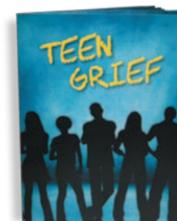


17 E. Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
Larkspur, CA 94939
(415) 927.2273
www.hospicebythebay.org



Notes

- **Thank you!** A list of Donors, including Legacy Gifts, Foundation Funders and Event Sponsors, is now available on our website. Please visit www.hospicebythebay.org. Click Donors, then Our Supporters.
- **If you'd like some help with starting "the Conversation," we can offer it.** Hospice by the Bay hosts seminars on advanced care planning. Give us a call for dates and times (415) 927.2273.
- **Mark Your Calendar – Advance Health Care and Estate Planning Seminars, Services of Remembrance, Grief Support Groups, Book Sales and Community Events can be found on our website calendar.**
- **Every December, Hospice by the Bay offers a gift wrap service at the Town Center Corte Madera. This past year, 101 volunteers spent 615 hours wrapping gifts! Thank you for your support of this fundraising program which raised over \$17,000.**
- **New publication: TEEN GRIEF** – This special book was written with the help of grieving teenagers. We hope that seeing how teens feel and reading what they think might help other teens deal with the pain they're feeling now. Please call (415) 927.2273 or email hospiceinfo@hospicebythebay.org to request a copy.



Hospice by the Bay

SPRING 2016

NEWSLETTER

Community Connections

SERVING MARIN, SAN FRANCISCO, N. SAN MATEO, SONOMA COUNTIES & CITY OF NAPA

From the Desk of Kitty Whitaker

April is Advance Care Planning month. And let's face it... talking about end-of-life care and decision-making isn't something at the top of anyone's list. It's hard to think about leaving the ones we love, and equally hard to envision losing our loved ones. I've worked in hospice care for over 20 years, and I still get a lump in my throat when I talk about this with my husband.

But from helping the thousands of patients we see every year, we've learned that having "the conversation" and making advance care planning decisions can ease a potentially difficult time. That's not to say the conversation is

easy. So let me suggest this: have a conversation with yourself, "What would I want if I were told I had six months to live? Where would I want to be? Who would take care of me? Would I stay home? *Could* I stay home?"

Now, don't think that as the CEO of Hospice by the Bay, I haven't had this conversation with my husband. I have. Several times. But by its very nature this is a conversation that should be repeated from time to time. Our wishes and needs change (or don't) as the years go by. So, as often as I've had the conversation, it's time to have it again.

What is advance-care planning? It's deciding what care you want (or don't want) if you are not able to speak for yourself. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. They're your decisions. And obviously they're personal. Sometimes we shy away from things like this or avoid them altogether because they're personal or we discover that sharing them is both rewarding and liberating. I believe "the conversation" is the latter.

And I'll put my money where my mouth is, by pledging here and now to have the conversation with my husband again. In fact, let's take that pledge together. **Let's have the conversation with our loved ones.** And after you've had it, share it. Because it's not enough just to have the conversation with one person, you have to share it with anyone who'll have to act on it. So after you've "figured it all out," and talked it all out, put it in writing. That way, anyone who might need the information will know what you've decided. It may not feel like it now, but you'll be giving them a gift.

One last thing... I meant it about taking that pledge together. Next time you see me, ask me if I've done it. And be prepared for me to ask if you have, too.

Sincerely,

Kitty Whitaker, RN, MS – Chief Executive Officer





▲ Sonoma Valley Hospital



▲ The Tamalpais Senior Living Community



▲ The Tamalpais Senior Living Community

Hospice Care Rooms

Hospice by the Bay fosters strong relationships with other health care providers that allow us to share expertise and resources to continue to provide excellent care to our patients in a cost effective manner. Our **Hospice Care Rooms** are a perfect example of the benefits that can come from a well-planned community effort that keeps the needs of our patients' front and center.

Our Commitment to Patient-Centered Care, Collaborative Relationships, and Cost Savings

The Hospice Care Room Program is a care option that we co-developed with two of our health care partners. **Sonoma Valley Hospital** in Sonoma County and **The Tamalpais Senior Living Community** in Marin County. **The program is a success because of our community funding partners: donations from individuals and grants from private, corporate and community foundations.**

The Hospice Care Room meets a critical need for patients who either live alone or live with a loved one who also may have health challenges and need more support. It is also a helpful option for those who have serious symptoms that cannot be managed at home. The room itself is designed to be as soothing and home-like as possible. Friends and family members benefit as well since they know their loved one is well cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. It is an ideal care option for patients like Sam and his wife, Alice.

Alice and Sam have been married for over 60 years and have no children. Sam, 89, is receiving routine hospice care at home. They live on a meager fixed income and Alice is his sole caregiver. At 86 years of age she is committed to being there for him. Before Sam and Alice experienced the benefits of hospice care, if he had a bout of shortness of breath, Alice would have to call 911 and Sam would be taken to the Emergency Department and sometimes admitted to the hospital. Now, on hospice care, he has regular visits from his nurse, social worker and hospice aide, minimizing the likelihood of a trip to the hospital.

As Sam's condition worsens, he needs more care at home. They cannot afford

to hire caregivers and Alice is worried about who would care for Sam if she was physically unable to. Our social worker told Alice about the possibility of placing Sam in one of our Hospice Care Rooms. There Sam receives the medical and emotional care he needs in a skilled facility with a comfortable home-like environment and Alice is still at his bedside. She also receives support from Hospice by the Bay's team.

Without the Hospice Care Room, as Sam's condition worsened, hospitalization would be the best option. **A hospital stay would cost about \$4,000 + per day.** With the Hospice Care Room option, Sam has access to both the hospice and skilled unit staff who address his more serious symptoms without hospitalization. **Thanks to our collaborative partners, Sam's care in the Hospice Care Room costs about \$700 dollars a day.**

Hospice by the Bay has trusting partnerships with other health care providers and we have loyal supporters who value the same commitment to quality health care. It is this combination that gives us the ability to provide a high level of care to those who come to us needing support and comfort in the final phase of their lives.



Your ongoing support... touches people in ways that have a remarkable impact.

In the past year -

- \$208,786 worth of caregiving funds was used for 285 patients, ensuring that no one was turned away and that needed personalized assistance was provided so patients could remain in their homes.
- **Art & Grief in the Schools in San Francisco** gives children who have lost someone, frequently through violence, the support they need to heal from significant loss.
- Grief counseling is available to anyone in the community who has lost a loved one regardless of whether or not their loved one received hospice care.
- **Music therapy improves quality of life for pediatric patients, as well as a new program for adult hospice patients with dementia.**

What is hospice?
 Hospice is specialized end-of-life care that attends to patients' needs in order to enhance their quality of life. Care is provided by a team of health professionals, skilled in pain and symptom management, providing comfort and care to patients and their entire family.

Who pays for hospice care?
 Medicare, Medi-Cal and most private insurance plans cover the cost of hospice, including medications, medical supplies and equipment. If you do not have any insurance coverage, we will work with you and your family to ensure you get the services you need.

 **Hospice by the Bay**
 www.hospicebythebay.org • (415) 927.2273



Is hospice only for the sick family member?

Our hospice care team helps all family members and caregivers cope emotionally during this difficult time, while providing the education they may need to best care for the patient. Hospice by the Bay also offers grief counseling support before and after a loved one's death.

Is it primarily used in the last few days of life?

Patients may receive care once their physician and the hospice physician determine that their illness is terminal, with an estimated life expectancy of six months or less. Medicare allows hospice to provide care for terminally ill patients, provided that certain medical eligibility criteria continue to be met, and the patient still wishes hospice care.

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Hospice Awareness Campaign

"We wish we would have started hospice care earlier" is feedback we frequently hear from family members after the loss of a loved one. Key research findings illustrate **misconceptions** about what hospice is, including:

- **It is usually expensive**
- **It is usually paid for by the patient and his/her family**
- **It is primarily used in the last few days of life**
- **It only provides care for the patient**

Hospice by the Bay launched an awareness campaign to address these issues. Poster ads in the San Francisco Chronicle were created to specifically address the myths concerning hospice care. Interactive online ads on SFGate reached out to a broader audience demographically. The Resource Library on our website now includes Hospice Care – A Case Study and The Benefits of Choosing Hospice Earlier, both based on actual patient stories that make it easy to understand just exactly what hospice care is. A new seminar, Myths & Facts About Hospice Care, is being offered several times a year.

Our goal is to help people make the decision to use hospice and to educate them on why it may be better to move patients to hospice earlier.