

Compassionate Connections



THE NUANCE OF PALLIATIVE CARE

A Chat With Ginni Blackiston, Palliative Care Coordinator



Many people wonder “What is the difference between palliative and hospice care?” Very often, the answer lies in a patient’s prognosis and their care plan.

Ginni Blackiston, Talbot Hospice Palliative Care Coordinator (pictured at

left), uses the definition of palliative care as specialized medical care for people who have a serious illness. Palliative care is appropriate at any stage in a serious illness, regardless of specific illnesses, and can be elected along with concurrent treatment options. Palliative Care can be the bridge that helps people with serious illness optimize their quality of life and outline care choices for the future that ensure a smooth transition from curative treatment to comfort-based care when appropriate, based on what the goals of care for each individual are. It can also be for those not quite ready for hospice services yet. For instance, if someone’s having chronic pain related to a cancer diagnosis, or maybe they’re having nausea because of treatment they are undergoing, palliative care can help.

Like palliative care, hospice provides comprehensive comfort care as well as support for the family, but, in hospice, patients have elected to transition away from curative treatment and focus on quality of life. Hospice is provided for a person with a terminal illness whose doctor believes he or she has six months or less to live if the illness runs its natural course.

Deciding on a Care Plan

Hospice and Palliative Care focus on helping to manage symptoms and improving quality of life, but palliative care can start much earlier in the patient’s prognosis when they still may be seeking curative treatment and desire a different medical model of care that treats the illness from a curative lens.

Our entire team assists as an extra layer of support. Denise Longo-Schoeberlein, CRNP, Talbot Hospice’s palliative care nurse practitioner, plays a role in the discussion about when a patient should transition to hospice. Occasionally, we have patients who opt to continue curative treatment through their final days and our palliative care team stays with them through their entire journey.

Support services can make such a difference for patients and their families. Often, caregivers are experiencing feelings of anticipatory grief and feelings of burnout given the daily schedule of caring for their loved one. Our grief support team and volunteers can help. The volunteers can provide support for someone who might need assistance with transportation, or a respite break for the caregivers.

How long are patients on palliative care?

As we are able to manage symptoms, patients can receive care as long as they continue to benefit from our support. However, our average length of stay is just about one year, and most patients do eventually transition to hospice care. A very small number actually die while on palliative care. The ideal goal would be to transition patients over to hospice service, so they can ensure patients can access the complete range of benefits hospice service provides.

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Compassionate Connections is a publication of Talbot Hospice, Easton, Md.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

As spring blossoms around us, the promise of new beginnings accompanies the changing season, bringing a sense of comfort after the cold winter. This season marks a time of renewal, growth, and hope – a sentiment deeply woven into the fabric of Talbot Hospice's mission. Our dedicated team continues to provide compassionate care, support and comfort to individuals and families navigating the complexities of serious illness.

In the spirit of hope, I am delighted to share some exciting updates from Talbot Hospice. A new blossom of hope has emerged with our collaboration with the Teleios Collaborative Network (TCN). Talbot Hospice proudly joins TCN, a network of non-profit hospices offering resources and support to navigate the ever-evolving healthcare landscape. It's essential to clarify that TCN is not our owner, governing body, or decision-maker; rather, it is a collaborative network of not-for-profit hospice leaders committed to enhancing our efforts and fulfilling our mission in the community.

This newsletter also provides insight into the distinctions between palliative care and hospice care. Discover the way in which we wrap our supportive services around each patient and family in a manner that is distinctive and respectful of their priorities. Additionally, we'll shine some rays of spring sunlight on the invaluable contributions of our volunteers, staff and the generosity of our community, which remains vital to sustaining our mission. Quite simply, our identity as a hospice is inseparable from the support of our community.

As we step into spring, let us come together as a community, embracing the spirit of hope and renewal that defines Talbot Hospice. Your unwavering support and commitment to our shared vision make a significant impact, and for that, we are truly grateful.

Wishing you a season filled with warmth, growth, and the joy of new beginnings.

Molly Kirsch, Executive Director

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How to access Palliative Care

Anyone can refer a patient for palliative care. A health care provider or a family member can call us, and we can discuss the patient’s needs, and initiate care. For more information or to make a referral, call Talbot Hospice Palliative Care Services at 410-822-2040.

PALLIATIVE CARE	HOSPICE CARE
Pain and symptom management to improve quality of life	Comfort and quality of life, support for patient and family
Any point in a serious illness, even while receiving curative treatment	Illness is terminal and prognosis is six months or less
Home, assisted living facilities, nursing home facilities, and other facilities	Home, assisted living facilities, nursing home facilities, and other facilities
Consultative visits by nurse practitioner and other team members, pain and symptom management, disease education, help coping with impact of serious illness, navigating treatment options	Nurses and doctors trained in symptom management and end-of-life care, nursing assistants for personal care, social workers for emotional and social support, spiritual care, volunteers, medication, and medical supplies and equipment related to the diagnosis
Based on each individual's symptoms and care plan	Based on each patient’s individualized plan of care - minimally once a week and more often when needed
Covered by Medicare and most commercial health plans	Cost of hospice care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most health plans

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!



Did you know that hospice is the only healthcare model that requires volunteers in providing services? Our volunteers are a critical part of our care team and take on a myriad of roles: sitting with patients, manning our reception desk, assisting with administrative tasks, gardening, meal preparation, representing Talbot Hospice at community events and more!

We recently completed a new volunteer training, but are always looking for more hands. For more information visit www.talbothospice.org/volunteer.

Waves of Support



Friends of Hospice raised \$80,000 for Talbot Hospice through the 2023 Festival of Trees events.

“Once again, Friends of Talbot Hospice have helped us advance our mission of service to the community through this generous donation. The Festival of Trees event is such a fun and wonderful way to allow the community to enjoy the holidays while supporting a great cause. We give a huge “thank you” to all of the volunteers, organizations and especially the festival leadership involved.”

- Molly Kirsch, BSN, RN, Talbot Hospice Executive Director

The Jon Fox Fishing Tournament raised more than \$12,700 to support Talbot Hospice.

We appreciate all participants, volunteers, and Doc's for making this event such a big success and coming back year after year to remember their friend and loved one and support Talbot Hospice.



Bountiful Home by Jamie Merida raised \$4,983 for Talbot Hospice during their Holiday Kick-Off.

This is largest amount raised yet during these special shopping days. Thank you Jamie Merida and team, and all who shopped to support us!

The 2023 Hospice Cup raised \$20,910 for Talbot Hospice programs and services.

Hospice Cup hosts an annual sailing regatta each September to raise funds and awareness of participating local non-profit hospices. Participating hospices use funds raised through Hospice Cup to continue to offer quality end-of-life care to patients, their families, and friends.



CHOOSE TO HELP US SAVE

Have you seen the price of stamps lately? How about the cost of printing and envelopes? We all want to save money, but for a non-profit community health care and service provider like Talbot Hospice, it's more important than ever. As you can imagine, an organization like ours, doing the great work we do for our patients and their family members, is information, data and document intensive. Added to that is the amount of correspondence and information we send out to make sure patients, families and the community receive all of the education, resources and communication they need.



So, beginning right now, with this very newsletter, we are asking you to help us start saving money on our printing, paper, ink, postage, stapling, folding, booklets, brochures and more. You can use the code on the right to change your correspondence preferences, including receiving future issues of Compassionate Connections in electronic form, and other communications from the Development Department.

Additionally, Talbot Hospice will begin to offer electronic information opt-in options for other uses. If it suits your needs, we hope you will help us save our resources.

Spring Clean-Up on Campus



Thank you to our loyal volunteers who took care of some Spring clean-up on campus! We can't wait to see everything in full bloom.

Profile in Caring: Meet Mary Camper



"I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be a nurse," said Mary Camper, RN, BA, "but my mother, who was a nurse, begged me not to." Mary's mother cited the many challenges she faced as a nurse, and encouraged Mary to pick a different career.

Mary complied with her mother's wishes, and received a degree in psychology from the University of Delaware, and promptly got a job in that field.

"I hated it," she said, "so I went back to waitressing at the Crab Claw." While working there, Mary had several encounters with patrons having health issues during their visit. "One man was choking, and I knew what to do," Mary exclaimed. Her mother finally relented, and Mary was off to nursing school, one of the best decisions she has made.

Fast-forward nearly 35 years, through numerous clinical specialties and roles, and raising a family (she has 4 grown children and 5 (soon to be 7) grandchildren), Mary was ready for a change.

On a particular day, Mary left work feeling overwhelmed. "I went home that night and felt like I was a terrible nurse and couldn't provide my patients with the care they deserved because I was just spread too thin. I prayed hard, I was single and had kids in college, I took a leap of faith and resigned the next day," she noted.

Within a week, the job at Talbot Hospice literally fell into her path. According to Mary, it was the best career move she made.

Mary's favorite part of her job here is all of the wonderful people she has met, and continues to meet. The patients, their families and the amazing team she works with are all part of what makes her love the job. "The team members are all kind, talented, optimistic and happy!"

For Mary, the best thing about being a hospice nurse is being able to help people at a very difficult time in their lives, and to be able to help alleviate physical and emotional pain. "It's the only job I have ever had where I feel my faith and my profession are aligned. There are so many wonderful stories—happy, sad, and all amazing."

"Working in hospice has made me a better person," Mary added. "I am more grateful for so many things. Tomorrow is not promised to any of us and today and each day is such a gift. **Our role is not to fix our patients or to cure them—our role is to meet them where they are, support their decisions and make the journey they are on as good as it can be—whether that is hours, days, or months.** Each patient has touched my heart in some way and some have left an indelible mark that I will never forget. I consider being a hospice nurse such a privilege."

HONORARIUMS, MEMORIALS, BRICKS AND PLAQUES

Choosing to make a lasting memorial is a very private and personal decision that many families and friends contemplate following the death of a loved one. For some, memorializing someone who has died is a very easy decision to make, while others may wrestle with the idea, especially as they move through the various stages of grief.

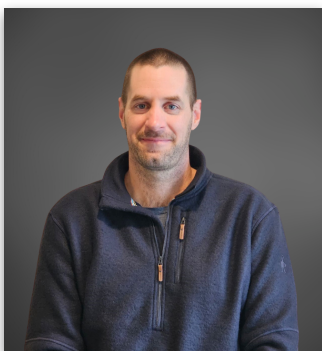
Many believe and understand that the memory of their loved one will always be alive and present in their lives in some form or fashion—a certain wind that blows, a favorite literature passage, a beloved destination, a song, or any number of symbols or signs.

There should be no rule or pressure for anyone to feel required to make a permanent memorial. Yet for others a memorial gift can help perpetuate the values and ideals that defined a loved one's life. A permanent marker can provide a place for people to go to mourn or remember or a permanent reminder for generations to come.

Honorary gifts, on the other hand, commemorate a significant event or an exceptional person who is still living. Honorariums can celebrate family and friends, accomplishments, a strong affinity or a meaningful date in a way that acknowledges the honoree's importance in someone's life.

At Talbot Hospice, we receive many requests for memorials and honorariums, in the form of a permanent marker such as a Memorial Brick or a Memorial Plaque, or as a gift given on behalf of friends or loved ones. They often desire to express their sense of love, loss and caring, compassion or praise to friends and family members of someone who is meaningful and dear to them. If you are interested in an honorarium or a memorial, please contact the Development Department at 410-822-6681, or visit [www. https://talbothospice.org/donate/additional-ways-to-give/](https://talbothospice.org/donate/additional-ways-to-give/)

A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again.
 –MAYA ANGELOU



WELCOME JOE SAUNDERS, NEW FINANCE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Joe Saunders, our new Finance Director. Joe has two decades of experience in public accounting with a focus on nonprofit and small business accounting and management. Joe enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and two young boys.



586 Cynwood Drive
Easton, MD 21601-3805

410-822-6681

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Grief Support Programs

Talbot Hospice's Grief Support programs are open to all members of our community, regardless of if a loved one was cared for by our team. We offer private and group counseling as well as a number of support groups for adults and children.

Below is a listing of our support groups. Please visit www.talbothospice.org/events/ for the latest schedule of events.

- Child Loss Support Group
- H.E.A.R.T.S Perinatal Loss Support Group
- Healing Through Yoga
- Caregivers Support Group
- Grief Support
- Survivors of Sudden/Tragic Loss Support Group
- Spousal Loss Support Groups for Men and Women