



Date: Feb. 24, 2009

Contact: Megan D. Smith
Director of Communications
msmith@ohioafp.org

Hospice Care: Getting the Most Out of Life

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Hospice care provides medical services, emotional support and spiritual resources for people who are in the last stages of a terminal illness and also helps family members manage the practical details and emotional challenges of caring for a dying loved one.

Rather than trying to cure an illness, hospice focuses its efforts to make the patient comfortable, ease their pain and other troublesome symptoms.

“Hospice is not about dying, it is about getting the most out of life until death. When faced with a prognosis of six months or less to live, the hospice team works with the patient and their family to help them meet their unique goals,” said Christine Hudak, M.D., a family physician at Hospice of Summa in Akron, Ohio.

Hospice programs respect the natural dying process and try to provide the best quality of life for patients with a holistic approach that provides spiritual, mental, emotional and physical comfort to patients, their families and other caregivers. These programs use a team of people who understand its special goals; the team includes doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual counselors, home health aides, bereavement counselors and volunteers.

The hospice team helps patients live out their final days with dignity and with as much physical comfort as possible and are provided wherever patients are spending their final days, including their own home, a family member's home or a nursing home.

“Most people wait too long to involve hospice. Unfortunately, many referrals happen within hours to days of death. Hospice can help the most if involved with the patient and family for several months,” said Hudak.

For the patient’s family, hospice can also provide appropriate training, help with practical matters associated with terminal illness and bereavement support to cope with the loss of a loved one.

To find a hospice program in your area, ask your family physician or contact your local hospice or home care association.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.



FACT SHEET

Date: Feb. 24, 2009

Contact: Megan D. Smith
Director of Communications
msmith@ohioafp.org

Hospice Care: Getting the Most Out of Life

What is Hospice?

Hospice care provides medical services, emotional support and spiritual resources for people who are in the last stages of a terminal illness.

Who Provides Hospice Care?

Hospice programs use a team of people including doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual counselors, home health aides, bereavement counselors and volunteers.

What does Hospice Provide to Families?

- Appropriate patient care training
- Help with practical matters associated with terminal illness
- Bereavement support

Sources: *Hospice Association of America*
www.familydoctor.org
www.webmd.com