

Mind, body and spirit: Caring for the whole person

by Linda Aerts

Anyone having the good fortune of a long-standing association with a primary healthcare physician knows the value this relationship can bring to a person's state of well-being. Just knowing that someone is familiar with your personal health issues and understands your nature, can provide a genuine sense of security. It can also be an asset when healthcare needs become more complex and require the attention of a medical specialist.

Optimum healthcare occurs when healthcare professionals function as a team. This is especially true when receiving a terminal diagnosis. Everyone works together to help make the patient as comfortable as possible. When you stop to think about it — isn't that what we all want?

When it comes to end of life care, Harbor Hospice believes in caring for the whole person — mind, body and spirit. Each patient's individual uniqueness is valued. We care for the patient's physical and emotional health, and respect cultural and religious diversities with the dignity and honor they deserve. Families also play an important role, and everything possible is done to respect the wishes of the patients and their loved ones. With all that in mind, the Harbor Hospice goal is to do everything in its power to assist patients to live life as completely and as comfortably as possible for as long as life lasts.

When a patient is referred to Harbor Hospice, there are a number of available options. The primary physician, in conjunction with the Harbor Hospice physicians, can care for patients, or they may elect to be cared for solely by the Harbor Hospice physicians. In either event, the primary healthcare physician is kept up to date on the patient's medical status. If safe, the patient may desire to remain in hospice care at home. Hospice care is also available in nursing and assisted living facilities, or at our Poppen House residence. Some people may be concerned about the cost of hospice care; however, Medicare, Medicaid and private insurances are accepted. Financial resources are available for those in need.

Our team of physicians, nurses, social workers, and certified nursing assistants are available to serve and assess the needs of patients and their families. Those without a church home may request spiritual care from our hospice chaplains. Volunteers are available to help make life easier in many meaningful ways. Families often ask, "Doesn't hospice care mean that we are giving up?" The reality seems to bear out that physical and emotional weights are lifted once the decision is made to enter hospice. Medical staff are *always* available day or night to answer questions or to make house calls when patients are in need. More time can be spent on living and enjoying the time that you have together. Time is precious — make every moment count.

For more information on hospice care, please call Bryan Cramer at Harbor Hospice at (231) 728-3442 or 800-497-9559. You may also visit our website at www.HarborHospiceMI.org.

Hospice care provides families financial relief

(Submitted by Harbor Hospice)

At a time when many families in Michigan are finding it difficult to pay for medications and health care, hospice care provides financial relief to its patients and families. Medications and equipment related to the terminal illness, visits by medical and nursing professionals, home health aides, short-term patient care, and bereavement support for the family following death are all provided by hospice care. Hospice care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance, providing a tremendous financial relief to families with seriously ill loved ones.

Findings of a major study of hospice care in America show that hospice services save money for Medicare and bring quality care to patients with life-limiting illness and their families. The study from Duke University found:

- Hospice reduced Medicare costs by an average of \$2,309 per hospice patient.
- Increasing length of hospice use by just three days would increase savings due to hospice by nearly 10 percent, from around \$2,300 to \$2,500 per hospice user.
- Medicare costs would be reduced for seven out of ten hospice recipients if hospice has been used for a longer period of time, the study found.

"Hospice helps people live with dignity, comfort and compassion and brings needed support to family caregivers. To know definitively that it provides a cost savings to Medicare is an additional benefit," states Jeff Towns, president and CEP of Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Hospice is not a place, but a philosophy of care that provides pain management, symptom control, psychosocial support, and spiritual care to patients and their families. For more information about Harbor Hospice, visit www.HarborHospiceMI.org or call (231) 728-3442.

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Here are some ideas of the things I can help you with:

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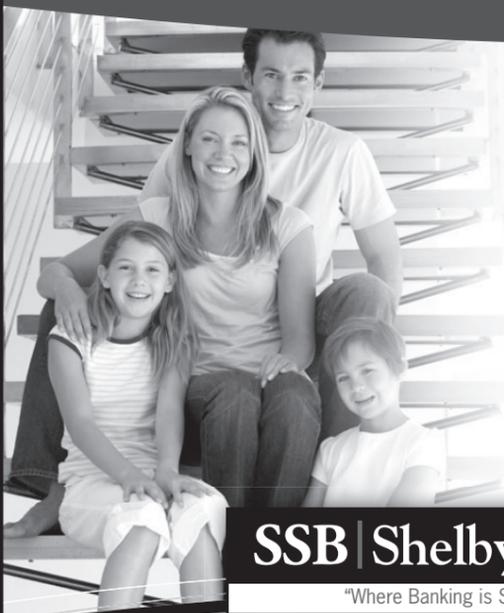
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When someone you love is dying, each moment becomes sacred, each conversation a memory to cherish for eternity. Harbor Hospice provides end of life care with dignity and respect. For more information, call us at 231.728.3442 or 800.497.9559.