

Palliative Care Leadership Center Graduate

Hospice Savannah | Savannah, Georgia

Trained at Palliative Care Center of the Bluegrass



Benefits of PCLC Training

- Completed initial action plan that acted as a springboard for future planning
- Improved cohesion within our team
- Comprehensive training book proved invaluable
- Excellent screening tool that we adapted for our program
- Extremely useful follow-up conversations and mentoring



Hints for Others

- Get all your agreements in writing! Hospice Savannah and Memorial Health had initially only obtained verbal permission from the state regulator to proceed with this project. Now that we are getting the agreement in writing, the changes in wording require that we provide palliative care as a separate entity and not as Hospice Savannah. This was the biggest stumbling block for us.
- Have at least a part-time MSW and chaplain dedicated to palliative care patients in your hospital and home care programs.
- Include the critical care committee of your hospital in the planning stages of developing your program.

About Hospice Savannah

Our palliative care program is the result of a collaborative effort between Memorial Health Medical Center, a 530-bed tertiary teaching hospital, and Hospice Savannah, a community-based, not-for-profit hospice with an average daily census of 241.

History of Palliative Care at Hospice Savannah

- Hospice Savannah had provided palliative care services as a community service to Memorial Health University Medical Center on a small scale since 1997; no contract was in place and no data was being collected
- Hospice Savannah identified need for better continuity of care for patients who needed help with managing symptoms but were not yet "hospice appropriate," as well as the need to assist patients and families with complex decisions concerning end-of-life care
- Hospice Savannah had identified Palliative Care as part of its strategic plan and approached Memorial Health with a proposal to partner and develop a formal program
- A business plan for a pilot program was developed and approved by the Hospice Savannah board; a pilot program in collaboration with Memorial Health was implemented in June 2004
- Palliative Care Program piloted on critical care units (NICU, MSI, and MST) and Oncology unit
- Formal pilot program ended in August 2004 and was successful; referrals have continued

Profile of Our Palliative Care Program

- Consult service with follow up visits both in hospital and at home after hospital discharge
- Staffed Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm; available after hours for emergency consultations
- MD and NP provided by Hospice Savannah; SW and chaplain provided by Memorial Health Medical Center
- Weekly team meeting with NP, Medical Director, SW and chaplain
- Chaplain and SW also work with home care patients
- Consult service saw 147 patients from July-December 2004; top reasons for consults were symptom management (pain/SOB) and assistance with helping patients/families with goals for end-of-life care

Next Steps

- Currently in the process of establishing a separate entity, 501[c]3 to enable us to offer palliative care services to both of our hospital systems
- Collaborating with the other hospital in Savannah to provide palliative care services to their patients
- Creating an endowment to provide the financial support necessary to maintain this program
- Expansion of program hospital-wide
- Building working relationships with physicians, hospital staff, patients, families and the community to provide information on palliative care and how it fits into the continuum of end-of-life care
- Developing a patient/family satisfaction survey
- Establishing defined roles of each team member