

Hospice

of Southern Maine

When each moment counts

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Dear Friends,

Hospice doesn't provide a cure, but it does offer healing...and hugs. Since opening our doors in 2004, Hospice of Southern Maine (HSM) has had the privilege of caring for more than 16,000 people and their families. The compassionate, comfort-focused care that we continue to provide would not be possible without the support of our local community and people like you.

Hugs

Many people have not hugged their loved ones in months because of COVID. According to research, hugs are important because they instantly boost oxytocin levels, which decrease stress and heal feelings of loneliness, anger, and isolation. Hugs build trust and a sense of safety. Hugs lift one's serotonin levels, elevating mood and creating happiness. Hugs strengthen the immune system. For patients and families in our care, hugs are not only still possible, they abound. Patients in home hospice likely have a safe "pod" of family and friends around them for socializing, support, and regular physical closeness. Patients at Gosnell Memorial Hospice House can have up to four visitors each day, two at a time, (before COVID, there was no limit) and once visitors have successfully screened at the front door, there are no restrictions on physical closeness, including – yes, you guessed it -- hugs.



Our care continues

Chris had cared for and supported her father for quite some time. When it became unsafe to be at home, arrangements were made for him at a local nursing home. Because of visitation restrictions from COVID-19, Chris found it difficult to be apart from her father and wanted to find a place where he had excellent care and she could easily visit him.

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In September of 2020, as Chris's father's health continued to decline, the doctor suggested it was time to consider hospice. First, Hospice of Southern Maine provided his care at home, and then at Gosnell Memorial Hospice House. At Gosnell, Chris was able to stay with her father 24/7 and had full time access to the staff to provide updates and support for her. She never left her father's bedside and she worked closely with each member of the care team to ensure both she and her father received the care they needed. This level of care, and accessibility of support, made all the difference.

Generous support from people like you has helped us keep our doors open and support our staff as they continue working on the front lines providing the highest quality of care to all our patients and families.

Grief and care support in a complicated time

Reaching out to and caring for family members after the loss of a loved one is an essential part of HSM's mission. Since COVID, we have found that grief is a lot more complex. It was expressed by one gentleman as, "feeling like the outside world is mirroring my internal experience. I feel so isolated, confused, sad, and uncertain." From the onset of COVID we have continued to make phone calls, offer virtual Zoom counseling, and provide online support groups. With more people at home, we've had the unique opportunity to check in and connect with more loved ones and support them as they move through their grief after a loss. We strive to keep our services accessible and are here to provide support to anyone who needs us.

Caring for patients and their families amid the COVID-19 pandemic has not been without its difficult moments. However, we have rallied together, supported one another, collaborated with our community, and through this experience have continued to provide the highest level of care to anyone who needs us. Being a local, independent non-profit has allowed HSM to remain true to its mission. Even though the future remains uncertain, I can tell you that with your help, we will continue to be here fulfilling our mission and providing outstanding end-of-life care for years to come.

You keep us going strong, thank you!

This year, we have all been challenged by COVID. Despite the pandemic and the many difficulties it has brought to our lives and work, HSM's quality care and support to patients and families has never wavered.

Rest assured that your gifts continue to work and support HSM's efforts to bring the best possible end-of-life care to our community. We need your faithful support now more than ever as we navigate this challenging time. Please join me in making a gift to support Hospice of Southern Maine.

Sincerely,



Daryl J. Cady
Chief Executive Officer
Hospice of Southern Maine