

•  
•  
• **Solari Hospice Care**  
• **MEDIA ALERT**  
•

**Solari Hospice Care Public Relations Contact:**  
Jill A. Brownley  
Director, Public Relations and Communications  
Office: (480) 664-8199  
Mobile: (602) 509-4311  
[Jill.Brownley@solarihospice.net](mailto:Jill.Brownley@solarihospice.net)

---

## **Solari Hospice Care Recommends Six Strategies to Help Patients and Their Families Choose the Hospice that's Right for Them**

*Demystifying Hospice Care: Understanding the Important Role that Hospice Plays in the Lives of Those who are Terminally Ill*

**Scottsdale, Ariz. – January 31, 2011** – It's never easy to decide what type of end-of-life care to choose for a loved one, but it's likely to be a reality for many people as medical advancements enable the population to continue to push past the average life expectancy.

So how do you choose what's right for you or your loved one? Nursing homes and hospitals are typically stale, sterile environments. Although they provide 24-hour care, nursing homes don't allow patients to have the privacy, space and independence they deserve. Home care services are ideal for people who can still get by on their own without constant medical support. There are also a variety of assisted living facilities that offer an intermediary between home care services and nursing homes. In addition, hospice—which offers care within a free-standing facility, in a patient's home or within a hospital or nursing home—provides terminally ill patients with high-quality medical care and pain management, as well as emotional and spiritual support tailored to each patient's needs.

"In traditional medicine, the goal is to extend a patient's life with aggressive treatments until all options are exhausted. In contrast, the focus of hospice care is to alleviate pain, manage symptoms and enhance quality of life," said **Gary W. Polsky, chief executive officer, Solari Hospice Care**. "The difference between standard medical care and hospice is not the difference between treating a disease and giving up hope. The fundamental principle of hospice care will always be to provide people with the greatest quality of life in the time they have left."

Added Polsky, "Oftentimes, patients diagnosed with a terminal illness have little or no knowledge of the care that hospice offers. The good news is that the boom in the hospice field in the last two decades has brought increased quality of life and less suffering and grief to the final days of millions of people, and may actually help terminally ill patients live slightly longer than they would have in hospitals.<sup>1</sup> Hospice is the best way to help patients and their families to spend more quality time together."

### **Helping Patients and Families to Choose the Best End-of-Life Care Option**

Knowing what to ask will determine the quality of care during this final phase of life. Solari Hospice Care provides six strategies to help patients and their loved ones to decide on the hospice program that is right for them:

- **Educate yourself on local hospices.** Ask your doctor what local hospice programs are available in your community. Your local hospitals should also be able to recommend hospice providers in your area. Be sure to take note whether the hospice providers you are considering also have inpatient hospice homes in the event that pain and symptoms become unmanageable and 24-hour care is needed.
- **Contact the hospices.** Once you've compiled a list of potential hospices, contact them and ask whether they are accredited, certified and licensed. If accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body, such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the hospice has sought accreditation and is committed to providing quality care. State health departments certify hospices, guaranteeing that the facility meets safety and health regulations. Licensing requirements vary by state and are generally overseen by its respective health department.

- **Ask for and check references.** Ask each hospice to provide references from professionals, such as a hospital or community social workers, who have used them. Talk with these people about their experiences. Also check with the Better Business Bureau or the State Attorney General's office to find out whether any complaints or lawsuits have been filed against the hospices on your list.
- **Inquire about a preliminary evaluation and plan of care.** As part of a patient's preliminary evaluation, a hospice should determine the types of services needed for the patient. The evaluation should contain what the patient can and can't do for themselves, as well as include consultation with family physicians already providing the patient with medical treatment. In addition, consultation with family members should also be included.
- **Discuss the treatment plan process.** After the preliminary evaluation, the hospice should develop a treatment plan that is carefully created with the patient and family and given to all service providers to ensure smooth coordination of care. The plan of care should be clearly written, with copies given to all loved ones involved. The plan should list specific duties, work hours and days, and contact information for the hospice care supervisor. Inquire how frequently the plan is reviewed and updated to accommodate any changing needs.
- **Learn about the hospice staff.** Hospice patients are cared for by an interdisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, social workers, counselors, clergy, volunteers and therapists. Ask about the patient-to-caregiver ratios to make sure that you or your loved one receives the right amount of care needed. In addition, ask about the continuity of care to determine whether or not the patient will have the same caregivers during the length of stay. This insight can give an indication how satisfied the hospice staff is or if there is a high turnover rate.

Hospice care can be provided to patients wherever they reside, whether in an assisted care facility, nursing home, hospital or their own home. However, sometimes patients facing a life-limiting illness need more care than can be provided at these options. Inpatient hospice homes are the best choice to meet these needs and offer family members the comfort of knowing that their loved one will receive the best level of care in a warm, comfortable home-like atmosphere dedicated to optimizing quality of life.

With this insight, you and your loved ones will be better informed how hospice care can address symptoms and pain management, ease suffering and grief, as well as provide emotional and spiritual support during the final phase of life. To learn more about the issues, opportunities and trends impacting the hospice industry, please read the new CEO Viewpoint blog from Solari Hospice Care's Gary Polsky at <http://bit.ly/f6evtE>.

<sup>1</sup> "National Hospice Study Reveals Gaps in Service, *Science Daily News*," [www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com), April 14, 2008

## About Solari Hospice Care

[Solari Hospice Care](#) is devoted to helping people live with dignity and comfort by providing trusted and professional hospice care in the Houston and Las Vegas communities. Focused on enhancing the quality of life for patients and their loved ones, Solari's exemplary team of physicians, pharmacists, registered nurses, certified nursing aides and counselors are specially trained to offer the most compassionate and comforting care designed for each patient's unique needs. To learn more about Solari Hospice Care, please visit [www.solarihospice.com](http://www.solarihospice.com), e-mail [info@solarihospice.net](mailto:info@solarihospice.net) or follow [@SolariHospice](#) on Twitter or [Facebook](#).

###