



GRANT FROM NH STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS EXPANDS ACCESS TO MUSIC AT THE BEDSIDE FOR HOSPICE PATIENTS

Live Music Helps to Manage Symptoms, Increase Comfort at End of Life

Home Health & Hospice Care (HHHC) has expanded its *Music at the Bedside* program, supported in part by a grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant enables HHHC to work with musicians specially trained in healthcare to offer live music at the bedside for patients and their loved ones at the Community Hospice House in Merrimack, NH. Musicians individualize the music for each session, responding to the particular situation and offering a variety of soothing and meditative forms of music. Music is incorporated as a complementary adjunct in the overall plan of care to manage symptoms and offer comfort at end of life.

“Music has the potential to contribute to wellness on so many levels, expanding the opportunity for healing at end of life,” says Tanya Prather, project director and HHHC patient care volunteer coordinator. “From a physical standpoint, research has shown that it can reduce blood pressure, relieve anxiety, and sometimes even contribute to pain management. Music can also be a gentle yet powerful force on both emotional and spiritual levels, creating a safe space to grieve or process, or nurturing an overall sense of well-being.” In addition, music can provide a welcome distraction and a valuable opportunity to reminisce about life, acknowledge meaningful connections with family, reconnect with one’s faith, or peacefully transition at end of life.

“The program’s benefits extend not only to patients, but in many cases to their loved ones,” shares volunteer music liaison, Basil Harris. As part of the program design, a trained hospice volunteer facilitates the musician’s bedside visits at the Community Hospice House, ensuring a quality experience for everyone. “Music puts a wrapping of peace around a situation and can really bring a family together.” Basil goes on to say that many times when he approaches patients or families to offer a bedside music visit, they are uncertain what to expect. Afterwards they are grateful for the precious moment spent with their loved one surrounded by the serenity and beauty of the music.

Home Health & Hospice Care has been providing music at the bedside to its patients for about five years, but the grant from the New Hampshire State Council of the Arts has allowed the agency to significantly expand the program, increasing the frequency and availability of music to its patients. For the purposes of the grant, HHHC chose musicians from the state Arts in Health Care Artist Directory. Each musician is unique in what he or she offers, ranging from sacred vocals to guitar or harp music. Musicians come with a variety of specialized training and experience; many are Certified Music Practitioners (CMP’s)™ trained through the Music for Healing and Transition Program (MHTP).

Home Health & Hospice Care has always recognized that music is a therapeutic enhancement to quality end of life care. If you would like information about the program, or would like to become an HHHC volunteer, contact project director, Tanya Prather at 603-689-1962 or Tanya.Prather@hhhc.org.

About Home Health & Hospice Care

Home Health & Hospice Care has been your neighborhood provider for home care and hospice services for over 125 years. Serving 33 communities in southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts, we provide traditional home care, inclusive of nursing, rehabilitation therapies, medical social work, licensed nursing assistants, as well as homemakers and companions. Our Hospice team cares for patients in their homes, in nursing facilities, and in the Community Hospice House, which is owned and operated by Home Health & Hospice Care. For more information, call 800-887-5973 or visit us at www.hhhc.org.