

Dear Friend,

I'm writing to brighten your day by sharing some heartwarming accounts of positive experiences people have had with our care during this year's pandemic. This year we've already provided care in Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties to more than 3,545 hospice and supportive/palliative care patients through Hospice of the Chesapeake and Chesapeake Supportive Care, and to more than 330 bereavement care clients through the Chesapeake Life Center.

Each person has a unique story, and we go out of our way to meet their needs and wishes. That gets noticed. A hospice patient family member wrote this in a recent thank-you note:

*Mom was deteriorating rapidly due to COVID-19 and was transferred from home hospice to your inpatient care center. With everything I'd seen on TV, I expected to be told we would not be able to see her. When we walked through the center's door for the first time, it felt like an oasis of calm. To our surprise, your staff readily helped us don masks, gowns and other PPE and briefed us on procedures and precautions before accompanying us to Mom's room and bedside. I was so relieved to see her that I wept. I visited her several times over the next few days and was there when she took her last breath. I will never be able to thank your wonderful staff enough for bringing my mother comfort, dignity and peace and for making it possible for us to be with her at the end.*





Here's what a man wrote after receiving grief and loss counseling:

*My brother Joe passed after a long siege with COPD. He was in an assisted living facility, when COVID-19 hit. He declined rapidly over a couple weeks and we got a call one morning saying the aide who checked on him at the start of her shift had found him dead. I'm haunted by the sad look in Joe's eyes the last time I saw him through the common room window. And we still haven't been able to have a proper memorial service.*

*It all brought me to my knees. I turned to the Chesapeake Life Center staff for help because I was scared by how sad, angry, depressed, and helpless I felt. The online bereavement counseling sessions are already helping me climb out of this pit of despair. I want you to know I've been singing your staff's praises and telling others not to be too proud to seek help after losing a loved one. Especially in these crazy times.*

Another person wrote this about the supportive care we provided to a family member in a nursing home:

*What a godsend you folks have been! My husband's health deteriorated to the point we had to put him in a nursing home last year. When COVID hit, he became very isolated and frightened and I was very stressed out by not seeing him and worrying about his care. Your telemedicine visits and in-person check-ins have kept his condition stable, calmed all our fears, and made this crisis manageable. Thank you!*



Our mission – “caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss” – is at the heart of our commitment to you and the communities we serve. That means any illness and any type of loss. It’s how we’re able to provide personalized hospice care for more than 580 patients a day and their families – young and old, with myriad advanced complex illnesses, in their homes or in assisted living and nursing home settings, fully insured or not. It’s why our staff keeps rising to the occasion caring for more and more people, learning to use new telemedicine technology, and wearing personal protective equipment, as needed.

Our care teams include doctors, nurses, and other clinical staff, as well as social workers, chaplains, counselors, and skilled volunteers. They have amazing experience, training, and credentials, but what truly sets them apart is their willingness to open their hearts to each unique journey with illness and loss. Time and time again.

No deadly virus can ever dampen that kind of compassion. That’s our normal. But what hasn’t been normal for you or for us is 2020. Compared to this time last year, our staff are caring for 100 more hospice patients each and every day – all while dealing with the same daily concerns and stresses when they go home as you and everyone else in our community. It has taken a toll on our front-line staff, but I’m in awe of how they shoulder on under the tireless and inspiring leadership of our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Eric Bush.

What we do makes a difference not only to our patients and families, but also to the beleaguered healthcare systems in the communities we serve. We offer accessible, equitable, and workable alternatives to hospitalization at a time when hospital acute care and ICU beds are in great demand and when people are more interested than ever in alternatives to hospital ER and in-patient care. We’re just part of the community response to COVID-19, but we come to work each day knowing we’re helping minimize the suffering and disruption.





We don't know how much worse the COVID-19 crisis may get and how long it might last. But I can tell you, on behalf of our entire Board and senior staff, that Hospice of the Chesapeake has big plans and we are managing our resources very prudently. We will be there for you, your loved ones, and your neighbors through the end of COVID-19 and into a future that may well bring other healthcare crises. Come what may, we'll be ready. Hospice of the Chesapeake relies on charitable support more than ever as we do our part to help our community weather the COVID-19 crisis. At a time when we've had added expenses, we've been forced to cancel all our fundraising events. With many in the communities we serve facing unprecedented economic hardship, donations are lagging.

We realize you may be struggling, too. But if you are able, we would be very grateful if you could help us fill the gap. Every gift not only helps financially, but also brightens our day!

Sincerely,

Michael J. Brady  
Acting CEO

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