

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27, 2018

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HOSPICE CARING, INC. RECEIVES GRANT TO CONDUCT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ON ADVANCED DIRECTIVES AND HEALTH CARE PLANNING

GAITHERSBURG, MD – Hospice Caring, Inc., a volunteer-based, non-medical hospice and grief support organization serving Montgomery County, is pleased to announce that it is one of several organizations awarded grants from the State of Maryland Department of Health to provide a series of community engagement activities within the Capital Region (includes Montgomery, Frederick, and Prince Georges Counties) between April 2018 and March 2019. The goal of the community engagement activities is to increase general awareness about advance directives and to promote attitude and behavior change around completing advance directives, particularly electronic advance directives.

An advance directive is a written or oral statement voluntarily created by an individual, which allows that individual to decide what kind of medical treatment they do or do not want, particularly in a medical emergency or near end of life. Despite the fact that most Americans think it is important to talk about their own and their loved ones' wishes for end-of-life care, surveys show fewer than one in three adults have completed an advance directive. Lack of awareness is the most frequently reported reason. Other reasons include feeling too young or healthy, concerns about cost or complexity to complete an advance directive, and differing cultural or spiritual views and values on death and dying.

"We are thrilled that the State of Maryland Department of Health has chosen our organization as one of the grant recipients," said Allison Stearns, Executive Director of Hospice Caring, Inc. "This funding allows us to use our expertise and connections to start important conversations in the community about making health care decisions before a medical crisis hits. Every person, whether they are 18 or 80, needs to discuss their preferences with their loved ones and designate a trusted family member or friend to speak for them if they can't speak for themselves."

According to a report by the Institute of Medicine, faith and community-based organizations have an opportunity to engage constituents and provide fact-based information to increase awareness about advance directives. These groups have the capacity to mobilize and maximize family, community and workplace supports to encourage conversations about advance directives to ensure individuals can make informed choices based on the needs and values of the individual and their family.

Activities may include but are not limited to: prayer breakfasts with speakers; life planning or retirement seminars; "lunch and learn" sessions; youth or college roundtable discussions; grief support meetings; speakers during holiday events; and other special events.

In addition to Hospice Caring, the following organizations have received grant funding from the Maryland Department of Health for Advanced Directive and Health Care Planning Activities: The Asian American Center of Frederick; Community Ministry of Prince George's County; Consumer Health First; Hospice of Frederick County; Maryland Citizens Health Initiative; and The Muslim Community Center. Contact any of these organizations directly for information about the events they will be offering.

For more information or to request a session through Hospice Caring, Inc. to increase awareness about advance directives, please contact Allison Stearns at 301-869-0113.

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About Hospice Caring, Inc.

Founded in 1989, Hospice Caring is a volunteer-based, nonprofit organization that provides companionship and practical support for Montgomery County residents with serious illnesses and their families, as well as emotional support for anyone grieving the death of a loved one. Hospice Caring's other services include; Adult Bereavement Support, Good Grief Clubs and Camp Erin for grieving children, Community Education on death and dying, and Volunteer Helping Hands support for people with life-limiting illnesses. Visit www.hospicecaring.org for more information on services or becoming a hospice volunteer.