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www.hospiceofcentralohio.org

Volunteer Services

Caring Presence Patient Companion Training and Guidelines

Purpose

To provide caring, reassuring presence for patients in the active dying process who are **NOT** in need of Crisis Care symptom management (as assessed and documented by a Hospice of Central Ohio RN Case Manager). Caring Presence Patient Companions (CPPCs) may also be activated to provide support to family members during this time, if needed and requested.

CPPCs supplement the care given by our paid staff clinicians and must comply with Hospice of Central Ohio's Limits of Care Policy for volunteers in direct patient care assignments (see Limits Of Care policy in "Additional Resources" section of this training manual).

I. Pre-visit Preparation

- A. Identify your availability and inform Volunteer Services (VS) staff of any changes. VS will maintain a current CPPCs roster for use by internal Hospice of Central Ohio staff, and CPPCs.
- B. Expect a Caring Presence shift to last approximately four (4) hours. Specific circumstances may change this (volunteer availability, patient/family needs, etc.). Please know that you can request longer or shorter shifts, based on your availability and preferences at the time you're called.
- C. Keep blank copies of Caring Presence Assignment Information forms and Caring Presence Assignment Documentation forms on hand and accessible. Consider assembling a tote bag to hold this training manual, as well as the following items:
 - Water bottle or bottled water/drink
 - Cell phone
 - Book of poems or other inspirational writings not specific to any particular faith tradition.
 - Extra clothing
- D. Dress code policy applies to these assignments; CPPCs must wear their ID badges during the visit.

II. Hospice of Central Ohio support for CPPCs Routine Patient/Family Support Operations/Processes

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A. During normal office hours

- Routine visits that change with frequency dependent upon patient need and staff availability (these visits include Patient Companion volunteers).
- All of these visits, as well as routing incoming calls to paid staff and monitoring needs of patients recently admitted, are coordinated by the Resource Center, which will be the Caring Presence volunteer's primary contact during normal office hours.

B. Crisis Care, or sometimes referred to as "Continuous Care".

- Crisis Care is round-the-clock paid staff presence that is initiated **in order to monitor and control a patient's symptoms. Caring Presence volunteers do NOT provide this level of care for our patients and should not be called upon to do so.**
- In order for Crisis Care to be initiated, a certain set of criteria must be met.
- Please note, dying is NOT considered a "crisis" in Hospice care, it is considered an outcome. If the dying process includes symptoms that need to be managed, Crisis Care may be appropriate. Often, it may not be, which is when a Caring Presence volunteer may be a better fit for the situation.

C. "On call," or "after hours" services.

- Hospice of Central Ohio can be reached at any time of the day or week.
- Between 4:30pm and 8:00am Monday- Friday, and 24 hours during weekends and holidays, phone calls to Hospice of Central Ohio will go to the On-call answering service.
- During these hours, the On-call RN will be the Caring Presence volunteer's contact for information needed from paid staff, or to report significant changes.

III. **Activation Process for Caring Presence volunteers**

A. Activation Criteria

- Patient is in the active dying process
- Patient would otherwise pass alone OR
- Patient and/or family would benefit from watchful, comforting presence of a trained and qualified Caring Presence volunteer.



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B. From 8:00am-5:30pm on Weekdays

- Resource Center paid staff receives request from RN Case Manager for Caring Presence volunteer support
- Using the Caring Presence volunteer roster, Resource Center paid staff begins contacting volunteers whose availability and travel preferences match the request.
- Resource Center paid staff contacts RN Case Manager with status of Caring Presence volunteer placement.
- Upon receiving the call from Hospice paid staff, the Caring Presence volunteer should complete the Caring Presence Assignment Form (taking down all contact and other assignment-relevant information)

C. After hours (5:30pm-8:00am) and Weekends

- On-call paid staff receives On-call nurse for Caring Presence volunteer placement.
- Using the Caring Presence volunteer roster, On-call nurse begins contacting volunteers whose availability and travel preferences match the request
- On-call nurse follows up with facility and/or family member (as indicated) with status of Caring Presence volunteer placement
- Upon receiving the call from Hospice paid staff, the Caring Presence volunteer should complete the Caring Presence Assignment Form (taking down all contact and other assignment-relevant information)



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- D. Caring Presence volunteers will receive the following patient information when called to fill an assignment
- Patient Name
 - Address (including room number if in a facility and any after-hours facility access codes if needed)
 - Any precautions that may be necessary
 - Any cultural traditions or preferences that should be known
 - Whether or not the Caring Presence volunteer should expect any family or other visitors during the visit, and any dynamics within that context that may be helpful

IV. Caring Presence volunteer activity during the visit

- A. Upon arrival, check in with the facility staff and/or family
- B. Sit with the patient and provide presence and support as requested
- C. Watch for signs of impending death and document changes, or document observations each hour
- D. Notify Hospice of Central Ohio paid staff of any significant changes, including obvious pain or death of the patient
- E. If in a facility, approach facility staff with any obvious pain or the death of the patient. If the facility staff or family would prefer to contact Hospice of Central Ohio staff themselves, that method of notification is fine.
- F. Refer to “When the Time Comes,” pages 8-21, as needed, for ways to comfort the patient and/or support family members during the dying process



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V. Upon Completion of assignment for Caring Presence volunteer

- A. Notify Hospice of Central Ohio paid staff if the patient dies during the visit
- B. Prior to the ending time of the visit, the Resource Center and/or the On-call nurse will attempt to schedule a replacement Caring Presence volunteer, often with several shifts covered if possible. You will be notified of your replacement, and if there cannot be one.
- C. If you are able, you should wait to greet your replacement and inform your fellow Caring Presence volunteer of the patient's condition, along with any other observations you feel are relevant.
- D. Caring Presence volunteers should be aware that a replacement may not be available, but should still be comfortable to leave when the visit time has elapsed.
- E. Regardless of whether or not a replacement is found, the Caring Presence volunteer should use the phone number provided at the beginning of the assignment and notify Hospice of Central Ohio paid staff of the situation.
- F. As with all Patient Companion assignments, the Caring Presence volunteer should submit a clinical record documenting the visit and observations within two days after the visit. All written records should be given to Hospice of Central Ohio paid staff or destroyed after the clinical record is submitted.