



# Hudson Valley Hospice

## Education Newsletter

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*Enhancing the quality of living for those at the end of life.*

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## Hudson Valley Hospice and the Heart

Heart disease is the leading cause of hospitalization, disability, and death in the United States. Risk factors may include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, obesity, unhealthy diet, and limited physical activity.

Patients with heart disease typically experience a progressive decline. Symptoms may include shortness of breath with minimal exertion or when lying down, edema or swelling, decreased energy and appetite. Patients are considered to have Stage IV heart disease when, despite receiving optimal medical management, they continue to have symptoms. Once heart disease progresses to Stage IV, patients experience poor quality of life, high symptom burden and face a median life expectancy of only 6–12 months. The unpredictable course and life-limiting nature of heart disease suggests patients would benefit from hospice care and support.

Through its Heart-to-Heart program, Hudson Valley Hospice provides end of life support for the many individuals in our community who are suffering from end stage heart disease. Hospice care takes a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to symptom management that focuses on improving quality of life. Hospice attends to the patient and their loved one's emotional and spiritual needs. Our interdisciplinary team is comprised of a medical director, nurse, social worker, chaplain, bereavement team, LPNs, health aides, and death doulas. We also have the ability to provide wound care, respiratory therapy, and some occupational and physical therapy.

Collaborating with hospice at the end stages of disease helps patients and families receive additional supportive care that aligns with their values, wishes, and preferences.

Taking advantage of collaborative partnerships between Hospice and nursing home professionals can enhance the end of life experience of residents.

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### Have a Question? Call Us!

**Referral Center**  
7 Days a Week  
845-240-7555

**Hospice Care**  
Call Us 24/7  
845-240-7510

**Palliative Care**  
845-240-7557

**General Inquiries**  
845-485-2273

**Bereavement  
Center**  
845-240-7579

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### *Is it Time for Hospice?*

#### *Heart Disease*

- Shortness of breath at rest or with minimal activity
- Use of oxygen
- NYSHA Class IV criteria (cardiac symptoms despite optimal treatment)
- Edema/swelling
- Comorbidities (like COPD or Renal disease)
- History of previous heart attack, arrhythmias, or lightheadedness
- Critical valve disease or an advanced coronary artery disease
- No longer a candidate for surgical procedures or a patient declines surgical interventions
- Cardiac complications (such as cardiac emboli stroke)

#### *Heart Health Awareness Month*



#### *Breaking Down the Myths*

##### **MYTH:**

I cannot keep my doctor if I receive hospice benefits.

##### **FACT:**

You can choose to keep your community doctor. The hospice doctor works with your community doctor to provide you personalized care.

#### *Quote of the Month*

“Where there is love, there is life”

-Mahatma Gandhi