



The Family Tree

Life Is So Similar

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Over the past year, I have had the privilege to meet and work with a number of patients and families facing the final stage of a terminal illness. I have listened to their stories and learned about their lives. What struck me was how similar our lives are and how difficult it is for people to ask for help. We pride ourselves on our independence and ability to improvise, adapt and overcome so many obstacles until the day we discover that life has its limitations.

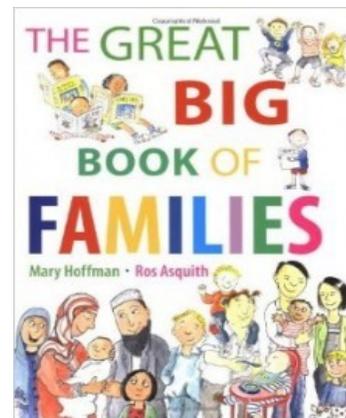
The time to act is now. It is time to have conversations, establish at least an idea of a plan and begin the process of putting affairs in order. I have seen patients and families avoid these tough issues until the point when the patient can no longer participate in their own planning. It makes it harder on the rest of the family. My father and I had "that

conversation" when he was first diagnosed with cancer and his treatment options were very limited. The bottom line was that we were able to provide him the type of care he wanted, his way and it made all the difference.

Coming from a large family with some members living out of town has its pitfalls. Not everything can be communicated when people are hundreds of miles away so it takes additional efforts to get and keep everyone on the same page. We did and it helped us in the process of grieving in the months that followed his death. We never, NEVER had to question if we made the "right" choices because he did, our job was to support him.

I know that not all families grew up the way I did. One thing that made our

communication better was the practice we had speaking with each other at the supper table. My mom and dad insisted that we come together and talk at the supper table every night. Sometimes it was hilarious, sometimes sobering but always meaningful. My wife and I followed that tradition and every evening at supper time, even when the kids had friends over for supper my wife would say "Ok, now tell me a story about your day today". She also made the guest tell their story. I believe this has led to my children's ability to communicate openly, honestly and be willing to be vulnerable in expressing their ideas. We don't always agree, but then again, we don't have to. The important thing is that we can talk anytime, anywhere, and about anything we need to.



How does Medicare pay for Hospice?

Since 1982, Medicare has provided a special Medicare Hospice Benefit under Medicare Part A insurance. When a patient is eligible for the Medicare Hospice Payment, Medicare will reimburse the hospice a daily rate under one of the four levels of care; Routine Home Care, Continuous Home Care, Respite Care and General Inpatient Care. The Hospice uses that money to pay for services and supplies that are needed to care for the patient as they relate to the patient's terminal illness.

The Hospice payment covers the visits by Nurses and Home Health Aides, Social Worker, chaplain, therapist and other interdisciplinary team members. The daily rate also covers the prescriptions related to terminal illness, supplies and equipment including hospital beds and oxygen in order to treat the symptoms brought on by their admitting diagnosis. It can get a

little complicated when explaining everything so don't be afraid to ask questions. As a steward for the Hospice Medicare Benefit, the hospice is obligated to make sure the patient and family understands the program prior to and at the time of admission.

When a patient or family requests an evaluation visit or a visit to discuss the needs of the patient, the hospice representative will review the benefits and limitations of the Medicare Hospice Benefit. If you would like more information, Call a Family Hospice Representative at (618) 277-1800.



Thursdays Are "Tuck In" Day

Every Thursday, a Family Hospice Volunteer calls each patient or residence to check on patients in order to make sure everything is going OK but more importantly to make sure the patient has everything they need for the coming weekend. This gives the patient or the care giver a chance to make sure they have the supplies and medications they need for over the weekend.

Some families have expressed surprise when they hear our

Volunteer calls them to check on them, but it is one way to make sure we have everything in place to make the weekend run smoothly. If patients and families have a need they can always call us 24/7. The "Tuck In" allows us to make sure we have things available for our patients. When a patient resides in a nursing facility, we even call the nurses to check and see if anything is needed.





New Heartlinks Logo

Family Hospice has been around for 25 years, and our Heartlinks Grief Center has been part of our “Family” for 20 years. The Heartlinks Grief Center offers grief counseling and educations for children, teens and families who have experienced a loss or life changing tragedy.

The new logo is reflective of the diversity and is symbolic of the many people involved in helping one another and “reaching out”. The Family Hospice Board of Directors,

The Heartlinks Team and Family Hospice have worked together over the past year to identify new ways to reach out to the communities we serve and to help people identify how to access this support. Anyone that has been touched by Heartlinks either by volunteering or receiving services have said this program has made such a positive impact on their lives.

On February 22nd, from 5:30 to 8:30 become a Heartlinks Volunteer. Contact Lisa at (618)277-1800 to attend the Heartlinks 101 training. Meet Diana the Director of Heartlinks, Lisa and Jodi or go to their web site at www.Myheartlinks.com



Thoughts to Ponder



To succeed in life you need 3 bones, a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.

Reba Mc Entire

As a child, my family menu consisted of 2 choices, take it or leave it.

Buddy Hackett

The best way to cheer yourself up, is to cheer someone else up.

Mark Twain

Choose a job that you love and you will never work a day in your life.

Confucius

What you get when you achieve your goals is not as important as who you become by achieving your goals.

Zig Zigler

We want to gently remind people that we don't have forever. In my work, I hear parents say that their children grow up so fast. But, they don't take the time to sit down and talk to each other. The last bastion of getting together is around the (supper) table.

Leo Buscaglia

KINDNESS is the language the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Mark Twain

I will prepare and someday my chance will come.

Abe Lincoln

Tell people that there is an invisible person up in the sky who created the universe and they will believe you, Tell them that the paint is wet and they have to touch it to see if it's true.

George Carlin

Special Thanks To Our Tree of Memory Sponsors

Through the generosity of our sponsors, Family Hospice is afforded the opportunity to offer our “specialty programs” to all our patients and their families as needed.

Family Table

Caregiver Comfort Bags

Music Therapy

Heartlinks Grief Center

Tuck-in Program

CareLink of Metro East

CertaPro Painters

Commerce Bank

Copper Bend Pharmacy

Delta Theta Tau– Gamma Chi Chapter

Junior Service Club of St. Clair County

Litteken Plumbing Co., Inc.

Mary Reuter

Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd.

Medicate DME

Memorial Hospital

ProCare Hospice Care

Rural Family Medicine Associates

Shay Roofing Inc.

St. Clair Square

Stifel—Stephen Shevlin





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*Heartlinks Group meets the
first Monday of each month.
Call Diana or Lisa for more
information.
618-277-1800*



Your donations keep our specialty programs thriving. Donate securely online at www.familyhospice.org or call the office for additional information on ways to help.

Family Hospice is venturing into the world of social media.

Check us out on Facebook and Twitter!

We are always looking for informative, fun and relevant ideas. What types of postings would you like to see? Let us know your ideas; after all, this is for you – our

Refer With Confidence

If your organization would like a speaker to talk with your group on end of life care topics or if you would like to make a referral for services please call.

(618) 277-1800

Available to evaluate patients on weekends and evenings.

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