

# Media Release

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## **Haven's house calls offer many benefits for patients and their families**

There's no place like home, and home is where most of us prefer to be when we're sick. Haven Hospice cares for people wherever they call home, whether in a nursing home, assisted living facility or hospital. For most hospice patients, home is the house or apartment where they live, a place they share with family members who are caring for them, and the setting where they are most comfortable.

"There are many benefits to making home visits," says Dr. Andrea Findlater, who visits families in the Palatka area. "It is convenient for patients and allows family members and caregivers to be more involved."

Adds Dr. Michelle Boatwright, who sees patients in the Lake City area, "Home visits provide as much comfort and support to family members and caregivers as they do for patients. They often find they are able to do more at home to assist with care than they expect."

Dr. Boatwright believes home visits give her a better sense of how disease influences her patients' lives and how their lifestyles may influence their disease. "I find that patients are more likely to open up about how they are feeling when I visit them in the home," she says. "There's not as much of a barrier as when they are in the office setting."

Dr. Geraldine Bichier, Haven's physician in the Gainesville area, agrees. "It's good to see them in their environment because you see what they live with every day and how they cope," she says. "You see what they can and cannot do on their own. We give them instructions they can manage so they can do their best to take care of themselves between visits."

Being able to provide immediate medical attention is another plus. Dr. Neel Karnani, Haven physician in the Jacksonville area, says a home visit by a physician can help prevent patients from having to go to the emergency room. "It saves them time and money and prevents them from becoming sicker," he says.

One of the most important ways Haven physicians address their patients' needs is by adjusting the medications they are taking to help relieve pain and symptoms. They also check to be sure they are appropriate. During one home visit, Dr. Boatwright noticed her patient was taking the generic and brand name of the same drug and advised him to stop taking both, ensuring that his dosages would be safe.

"Our patients and their families are surprised by the depth of our commitment to them," says Dr. Robert McCollough, a longtime Haven physician. "In one sense I'm like the old country doctor who still cares for people in their homes. But I'm also using modern techniques and advancing therapeutic treatment to bring their pain and symptoms under control.

"There's so much you can do for people at the end of their lives to make them comfortable and pain-free," he adds. "It's a very good feeling to know we've helped our patients and their families."

#### **About Haven Hospice**

Haven Hospice is North Florida's expert in end-of-life and palliative care and is one of three 2008 Circle of Life Award® winners nationwide to be recognized as leaders in improving the care of patients near the end of life or with life-threatening conditions. Haven Hospice has also been recognized as a Florida Pacesetter for its leadership in promoting living wills. Haven Hospice has served nearly 50,000 patients and families since 1979 and has been licensed in Florida as a not-for-profit hospice since 1980. For more information, visit [www.havenhospice.org](http://www.havenhospice.org) or call 800-727-1889.

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