



PRESS RELEASE

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Palliative Massage Therapy offers gentle comfort to patients

(GAINESVILLE, Fla.) - Palliative massage has become one of the fastest growing trends in therapy for hospice patients. Used as a method for relaxation to alleviate stress, anxiety and pain with a light hands-on approach, as well as providing an alternative to those who can't take medication or prefer not to, palliative massage therapy has become essential in hospice care.

According to the article "Massage in Hospice Care" by Dietrich W. Miesler, MA CMT, the reason why touch is so powerful is that touch is the first sensation that greets us at birth and the last to leave us when we die. Touch has been known to create a rise in blood pressure for those in a deep coma and able to penetrate the nonverbal stage of late-stage Alzheimer's patients. Miesler also mentions that patients sometimes reduce their demand for medication when massage is an integral part of the treatment plan.

Due to the wonderful health benefits of massage, the palliative massage therapy program is considered part of the plan of care when a patient is admitted to Haven Hospice. Haven's palliative massage therapy program is staffed by trained Licensed Massage Therapists (LMTs). All LMTs are required to go through palliative massage training session and are evaluated frequently on their skills and abilities.

Charles Vaughan's wife, Jackie, had been suffering from dementia for 15 years. He said palliative massage from Haven has had a tremendous impact as it took a lot of the tenseness out of her body. He said the effect from the massage seemed to last more than 48 hours and she has a better night's sleep after the treatment.

"Everything is approached much more carefully," says Elisabet Carlson, LMT, Licensed Massage Therapist for the Chiefland team. "You can't assume that patients move as easily. Their skin and bones are fragile, and it can take time for someone to get comfortable." To increase patients' comfort, Elisabet will layer towels over the skin and massage through the towels.

One-third of the patients take advantage of the program and Haven Hospice's Licensed Massage Therapists give 5,000 to 6,000 massages a year. A recent phone survey of Haven's palliative massage patients indicated the program's powerful impact. Pain and anxiety were significantly decreased

following the treatment and improved mobility, less inflammation and better sleep were also reported as a positive effect.

For more information on Haven Hospice's Palliative Massage Therapy program, please contact Haven Hospice at 800.727.1889 or visit www.havenhospice.org.

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 advance directives. Haven Hospice has served more than 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, or call 800.727.1889.

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