

# South Florida Hospital News<sup>®</sup> and HEALTHCARE REPORT

THE REGION'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS & PHYSICIANS

## Celebrating Life and the Next 30 Years

Catholic Hospice is on the threshold of celebrating its 30 year anniversary, serving people of all faiths in our community. With this milestone comes an opportunity to reflect not only on past accomplishments, but rather and more importantly on the future – the next 30 years.

There have been many changes in the hospice landscape from how services are referred and paid, to merging hospice providers and consolidation in the industry as well as adapting care delivery to value based care. What hasn't changed, however, is the need for appropriate and compassionate hospice care and the quality of life it provides to the individual patient and the family. Hospice provides quality, compassionate, comprehensive end-of-life care for people facing a life-limiting illness or injury. These patients are some of the most vulnerable and most expensive in our health care system.

As Catholic Hospice embraces the challenges ahead, it does so with a strong and dedicated team, many of which have been together almost since its inception. They provide the comfort families need in the most difficult days and understand how difficult these bittersweet moments can be as they make final and lasting loving memories and relish precious old memories together.

Catholic Hospice is committed to being a reliable and supportive resource for the community by offering special programs such as Camp Erin which serves bereaved children. Supported through the Moyer Foundation, the camp, which runs twice a year for 6 – 17 year olds, is free of charge and provides bereaved children a safe place to tell their story, their feelings and learn healthy coping strategies for their grief journey.

The Lchaim Jewish Hospice program, which is accredited by The National Institute for Jewish Hospice (NIJH) is staffed with professionals trained in Jewish rituals and traditions and sensitive to the needs of the people of the Jewish



**Dr. Tracy Romanello**

faith. A Rabbi for spiritual and emotional support in accordance with the family's own belief system is always available.

In collaboration with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and Veterans Association, "We Honor Veterans", is a program Catholic Hospice designed to empower hospice professionals to meet the unique needs of dying veterans. The program teaches respectful inquiry, compassionate listening, and grateful acknowledgment, to comfort patients with a history of military service and possibly physical or psychological trauma. The WHV program has been very successfully received in the community and the Miami inpatient hospice at the VA.

With their newly installed management team, Catholic Hospice is equipped to face the challenges ahead with the greatest level of professionalism, patient care and satisfaction. Executive Director, Dian Backoff, brings a broad range of expertise in hospice management and a fresh perspective on evolving industry trends; new Medical Director, Tracy Romanello, D.O., with a very specific growth focus on the emerging Palliative Care business unit, and Rochelle S. Clarke, PhD, LMFT, MSHR - Director, Quality and Organizational Development, focusing on consistent high quality service and care, the team is evermore committed to its Mission and

dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for patients and families on their journey through life-limiting illness and bereavement.

Backed by Catholic Health Service and building a larger community through partnerships with physicians, healthcare professionals, academic institutions, and youth programs, the new team seeks to be on the vanguard of hospice and palliative care in south Florida.

Where palliative care programs and hospice care programs differ greatly is in the care location, timing, payment, and eligibility for services. In hospice care, you must be considered to be terminal or within 6 month prognosis. For palliative care, there are no time restrictions. Palliative consults can be received by patients at any time, at any stage of illness whether it be terminal or not. "Since there are no time limits on when you can receive palliative care, it acts to fill the gap for patients who want and need comfort at any stage of any disease, whether terminal or chronic." shares Dr. Romanello. "In a palliative care program, there is no expectation that life-prolonging therapies will be avoided."

"We plan to work more closely with our community so we can serve all appropriate patients and do an even better job of responding to the needs of all clients as we offer optimal service delivery. Terminal care is complex. We need to remain sensitive and flexible as we approach patients and families and help them navigate through this very difficult journey," states Dian Backoff.

There will be many changes in the hospice environment in the next few years. Quality concerns, reimbursement, regulations, innovation in care and doubtlessly other areas that will surface over time. Catholic Hospice is poised to lead the way in quality initiatives and compassionate care as the panorama shifts. Catholic Hospice is ready for the next 30 years!