

Inpatient Hospice meeting its mission

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For the Van Wert independent

A 12-bed inpatient hospice center is Community Health Professionals' (CHP) latest addition in Van Wert; however, what patients' families have to say is more telling about the facility's mission in the community.

The Inpatient Hospice Center opened May 27 and received its first patient, Glen Rager, the next day. Since then, the facility has seen an increase in patient numbers. "We are at a steady half capacity at this point of the game," Director of Operations Shelly Barrett said. "We expect full capacity with a waiting list in the near future."

According to Barrett patients and their families have been well pleased with the facility and its services.

Glen Rager was receiving hospice for a terminal lung ailment at his home. His family heard about the inpatient hospice facility in the community and read about it in the paper. Glen and his son, Dan, drove around the yet-to-be-completed Inpatient Hospice Center for a closer view of the facility. Once the facility was completed, CHP worked in collaboration with Glen's hospice agency and admitted him on May 28.

According to Dan, Glen received excellent care. "The whole experience for our family was wonderful and inspiring," explained Dan.

He noted that the nurses extended love, attentiveness and compassion to not only Glen, but to the entire family. The concern the staff showed for its patient was extended to the family as well. All were made to feel comfortable, both physically and spiritually.

On June 12, Glen passed away at the Inpatient Hospice Center. "Dad's death was handled with dignity," Dan Rager said. "He died with dignity and it was because of his care at the facility. We felt the nurses' love for him and it moved into his care until the last moment. It was wonderful for our family."

Jackie Nofer's husband, Donald, suffered from Lewy Body Dementia, which is a combination of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Social services at Van Wert County Hospital informed Jackie that Donald was terminal and suggested inpatient hospice care. Because Jackie is raising her grandchildren, she felt the CHP Inpatient Hospice Center was the best choice for her family. "I didn't

want my grandkids subjected to my husband's passing," Jackie said.

Jackie never left Donald's side while at the facility and his kids, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were able to visit any time ... day or night. The staff took care of Jackie and her husband. "The care is fantastic, from housekeeping, the nurses, the doctor on call, the cook, everybody ... they all embrace you," Jackie said.

When he needed care, the staff took as long as was necessary to care for her husband. Jackie and her family also used the family lounge and kitchen. After three weeks at the center, Donald died in peace. CHP Inpatient Hospice treated the Nofers as if they were family and "made the passing go a little easier," Jackie said.

These two patient testimonies reveal the dedication of the facility and the hospice-trained staff to ensure complete patient and family comfort. Although health care is important, so is service. For example, a patient wanted a steak, but the cook didn't have one. A staff member went to the store, bought a steak and cooked it for the patient. "I've been in hospice for a long time and the biggest thing I see is this added level of care is such an asset to the community and patients we serve," said Barrett.

The staff at the CHP Inpatient Hospice Center is also willing to give guided tours to increase the knowledge of the patients and families it serves. Family consults are also available to ensure patients receive the appropriate type of hospice care.

In addition, some individuals who donated money to the project have toured the facility and donated more unsolicited funds because inpatient hospice is now tangible.

"Inpatient Hospice has been a wonderful addition for this community," Dan Rager said. "It's something that we've needed."

"If your loved one is nearing the end of life, the hospice center is the place to go," Jackie Nofer added. "It's a beautiful place ... not only for the care you get, but the facility itself."



Photos: upper, one of the CHP Inpatient Hospice Center rooms; center, Glen Rager, lower, Donald Nofer.