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Alabama Hospice
Organization
Conference

Congress Stops
Proposed Hospice
Budget Cuts

Patient Speaks
Out Against
Tobacco Use

Alabama League
of Municipalities
Auction

Faith and Grace
Remembers

Alabama Hospice Organization Conference

Between August 6th and 8th, Montgomery welcomed representatives of hospice organizations from all over the state when the annual Alabama Hospice Organization Conference was held at the Renaissance Hotel. Participants, including Faith and Grace Director Maggie Thompson, attended educational sessions on a wide variety of topics including changes in the Medicare Conditions of Participation, national challenges to hospice providers, and effective strategies for

preparing for surveyor visits. Many of the talks were presented by national companies like Palmetto GBA that provide products and services to strengthen young, nonprofit hospice organizations. Other presenters included Judi Lund Person, a spokesperson for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, and John Redden, Vice President of HospiceScript. The three-day conference provided an excellent forum for sharing ideas, strategies, and stories with other growing



hospice teams.

This year, Faith and Grace Hospice was pleased to help out by tackling the special task of organizing a silent auction to benefit the statewide AHO. Gloria Burton collected donations and proctored the auction throughout the conference, raising more than \$2000 for planning costs associated with future AHO initiatives.

Congress Stops Proposed Hospice Budget Cuts

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) announced in July that it would cut Medicare reimbursement rates for hospice, forcing many hospice providers across the country to either significantly scale back the care they provide to terminally ill patients or to shut their doors altogether. The final rule, published in The Federal Register, was to take effect October 1.

“Let’s be clear, the Administration’s cuts will seriously hurt the most vulnerable – the termi-

nally ill,” said J. Donald Schumacher, president and CEO of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), which represents 4,000 hospices nationwide. “By issuing this rule, CMS is taking an end run around Congress and its longstanding role protecting hospice.”

“The government’s reason for its decision that would effectively cut rates – the need to save money – simply isn’t true,” noted Jonathan Keyserling, executive director of the Al-

liance for Care at the End of Life, an affiliate organization of the NHPCO. “Research has shown that hospice saves the Medicare system money, is highly rated by family members of hospice patients, and enables the patient to die at home in most cases,” says Keyserling. “This rule defies logic, and will have a direct, negative impact on care at the bedside.”

According to an independent 2007 Duke University study, hospice saves Medicare an average of \$2,300 per (see p. 4)

Patient Speaks Out Against Tobacco Use

Lifelong Montgomery resident Deborah Booth has news she wants to share with the community. At 54 years old, she and her husband are about to welcome their first great-grandchild. At an age when some couples are still hoping for their first grandchild, Deborah might be blissfully preparing for a blessing few of us will receive. Instead, she is in a fight for her life against lung cancer. Deborah, who has smoked longer than she has been married, wants everyone to know the real cost of cigarette addiction.

At Camp Bluebird this past spring, a camp for adult cancer

patients and survivors, Deborah told other campers about her mission to wake up smokers to the truth. The group listened, some recognizing their own experiences speaking out about the link between cancer and tobacco use, as Deborah told the story of a young girl at her church who asked her about her illness. "I told her, Mrs. Deborah smoked cigarettes and they made her very sick. The next week that girl came back to church and told me that she had gotten her momma to give up smoking."

It's a message she wishes someone had driven home to

her, when she was younger.

Mr. and Mrs. Booth just celebrated their 39th wedding anniversary. Their first great-grandchild is due in September. Now their focus is on reaching out to smokers to share her story. Please share her message with the smoker in your life: "Stop smoking now. You don't know who is waiting to come into your life."

Quit Smoking: Resources to Help

1 (800) QUIT NOW
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm

Let the
Government
know that you
want to continue
to support
hospice care:

The White House
202-456-1111
comments@
whitehouse.gov

Congress
Jeff Sessions
(202) 224-4124

Richard Shelby
(202) 224-5744

Terry Everett
(202) 225-2901



Great Grandmother Deborah Booth with Aiden Payton

ALM Holds Silent Auction to Benefit F&G

In late August, the staff of the Alabama League of Municipalities held a silent auction organized by Faith Ann Gunn to benefit Faith and Grace Hospice.

Said Faith Ann, "We receive many 'incentive gifts' from companies that we order products from, mostly office supply companies. In the past, we have had a drawing following our staff meetings and just given the items away to employees. When I was told that we had one of these drawings coming up, I made the

comment that there were probably items to be given away that I would be interested in purchasing but that when you just got the luck of the draw, you might or might not receive one of the items you were actually interested in. I suggested that we hold a silent auction so that everyone would have an opportunity to purchase anything that they might be interested in and give the proceeds to a worthy cause.

"I became familiar with Faith and Grace through our

church by providing meals to Hospice patients and through Elaine McDaniel and Ramona Hopson who are close friends and avid volunteers. We not only had a lot of fun with the auction but it was a winning situation for our staff as well as Faith and Grace Hospice with a donation of \$240.50!"

The Auction included MP3 players, cameras, gift cards, and other promotional items given to ALM by vendors. Thank you, Alabama League of Municipalities!

Landmark Church Hospice Ministry Provides for Patient Needs

August can be a brutally hot month in Alabama and not a time to be without air-conditioning, but that is exactly what happened to one of our patients. The patient's home was not being cooled adequately and repairs were going to take awhile. The patient's case manager, Jerome Belser, brought the problem to the atten-

tion of Gloria Burton. As the Volunteer Coordinator, Gloria maintains a fund that provides for patient needs that are not covered by the Hospice Medicare Benefit. This fund was set up by the Hospice Ministry at Landmark Church of Christ and because of their generosity we were able to purchase a window unit for this family.

This is just one of the many projects we are able to do each year because of donations made for patient care by people who truly care about terminally ill patients and their families.



If you are interested in volunteering or making a donation for patient care, call Gloria at 834-9800

(Cont. from Pg 1)
 patient, amounting to a total savings of about \$2 billion a year.

Considered to be the model for high-quality care for terminally ill patients, hospice focuses on caring, not curing, and, in most cases, is provided in the patient's home. Hospice professionals are experts in providing pain and symptom management to the dying. Additional services include emotional and spiritual support to patients and their family caregivers as well as caregiver training. More than 1.3 million dying Americans received care from the nation's hospice providers last year, a number

that continues to rise.

A Gallup poll found that nine out of 10 Americans, if faced with a terminal illness, would want to remain in their homes and receive the services that hospice provides. In fact, more than 80 percent of hospice care in the U.S. is provided in the home. And patient satisfaction with hospice approaches 100 percent as shown by data collected from family caregivers.

Congress has historically rejected Administration requests to reduce the level of hospice reimbursement, realizing the harmful impact such cuts would have on care at the bedside. And this

time is no different. The first week of August, when the rule came up for vote, Congress intervened to stop the Administration's cut to hospice care, before the rule could go into effect. Because people raised their voice in support of hospice, a bicameral and bipartisan group of more than 90 members of Congress sent a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt in opposition to the proposed rule.

"It is in our nation's fiscal and moral interest that high-quality hospice care remains an option for all who need these unique services and support," said Keyserling.

Faith and Grace Hospice, INC. is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization.

Jerome Belser, RN
 Case Manager

Gloria Burton
 Volunteer Coordinator

Angie Crew, RN
 Case Manager

JoAnn Erhardt
 Bereavement Services

Rosa Lee
 Patient Care Assistant

Brenda Pringle
 Office Manager

Helen Sandy, RN
 Case Manager

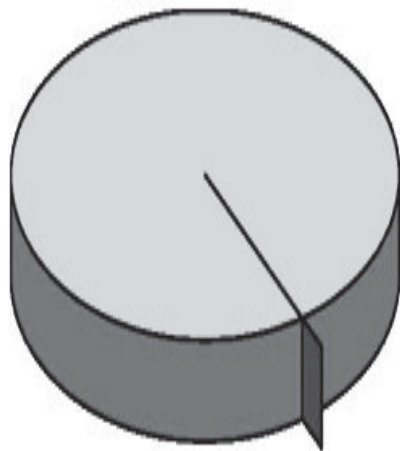
Tom Searcy
 Social Worker

Maggie Thompson, RN
 Hospice Director

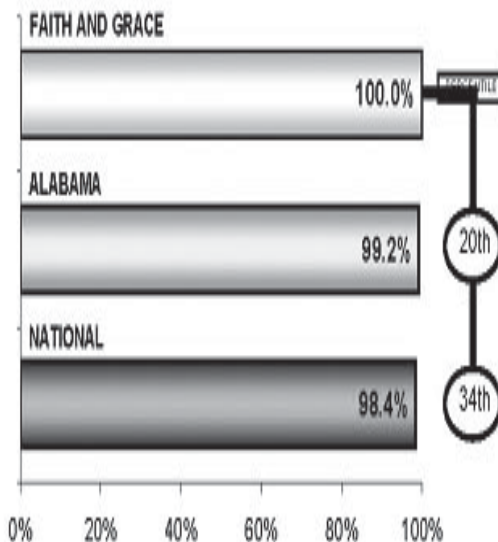
Dr. William von Taaffe
 Medical Director

2nd Quarter Survey Results: 100% Approved

Would the families of former Faith and Grace Hospice, Inc. patients recommend this hospice to others? (G3)



Yes: 100%
 No: 0%



A caring partner to patients, families and physicians.