

NEW YORK  HEALTHCARE PROFILES

Making a Difference

At Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, Inc., a legacy of patient-focused care wins accolades and the affection of the communities it serves.

For most people, hospice care is not a top-of-mind issue until it becomes an immediate need. At that point, choosing the right hospice program for a loved one is among the most important decisions a family can make.

For 33 years, Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, Inc. has served generations of families seeking high-quality and compassionate end-of-life care in homes, hospitals, and facilities, as well as the agency's Kaplan Family Hospice Residence in Newburgh.

"Integrity is everything," says Sandra Cassese, the organization's executive vice president and COO. "We are singularly focused on delivering a personalized plan of care for every patient and making a difference in someone's last days and months."

CARE AT ALL HOURS

Accredited hospice programs must abide by many state and federal regulations. Some of these seem obvious, such as the ability to manage a patient's pain. Others are more nuanced, like whether a program can provide emotional and spiritual support to patients and caregivers.

Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties exceeds state and federal standards by just about every metric. Its accolades include being named a top 10

hospice in New York state for 2019 and 2020 through Hospice Compare, a quality reporting system created by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Many of the glowing reports Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties receives are based on surveys completed by patients' families who have witnessed its commitment to providing compassionate physical, emotional, and spiritual end-of-life care.

Cassese credits the agency's interdisciplinary team of dedicated nurses, physicians, home health aides, social workers, chaplains, and volunteers: Working in concert, they connect with each patient to understand their desires and wishes while training families to care for loved ones and prepare for the road ahead.

That's not the only difference. While most hospice programs primarily operate on a 9-to-5, Monday through Friday schedule, Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties remains open all week and offers visits and admission within 24 hours. Round-the-clock hospice care of this kind means that no matter what day or time a patient is in need, there's a team poised to respond—from the social worker helping with last-minute paperwork to the chaplain comforting both the patient and family in their last moments together.



Sandra Cassese
Executive Vice President and COO
Photography by Franco Vogt



Dan Grady
President and CEO

"You can't undo death," Cassese says. "The experience of watching a loved one pass is the memory people are left with, and we've made it our mission to meet their needs at this critical time."

While the benefits of this compassionate approach might seem immeasurable, there's data to confirm its efficacy. Nationwide, the average length of stay in many hospice programs is falling—a sign that patients are entering too late. At Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, that number has increased. "People in our community are calling us sooner," Cassese says. "They've heard about or witnessed the good work our teams have done, and they know who to call when they're in this critical situation."

