

LONG ISLAND HEALTHCARE PROFILES

Patient-Centered Care

East End Hospice provides compassionate care and comfort to terminally ill patients, caregivers, and loved ones.

One morning, in January 2014, a woman sought pain relief and comfort under the care of Mary Crosby, RN, in the emergency room of a leading cancer hospital. After traveling two hours to reach the hospital, the woman disappointedly explained that she'd miss her son's wedding that afternoon.

Today, as president and CEO of East End Hospice, Crosby understands that with hospice, the woman would have worked with her care team to tailor her medication, get a wheelchair, and even enlist the help of a social worker for emotional support. "Her wedding plans could have been accommodated and an important family memory created," says Crosby.

Although hospice can improve care and comfort for terminally ill patients, only three out of 10 eligible New Yorkers receive hospice care, according to End of Life Choices New York—a statistic Crosby would like to change.

"The current paradigm depicts patients as valiant warriors who must beat their illnesses, and there's a stigma that hospice suggests a surrender of hope," she says. "Hospice, however, creates an atmosphere that prioritizes quality of life and encourages patients, caregivers, and families to seek out moments of joy despite their illness."

Hospice care offers the opportunity to spend time with loved ones and provides relief from the burdensome cycle of hospital visits. According to Crosby, hospice helps families plan for a serene passing and optimize quality of life with help from a team



of healthcare professionals and volunteers who focus on caring and comfort, not cures. "Overwhelmingly, patients and families wish they'd reached out to us sooner," she says.

A Life-Affirming Mission

As an independent, not-for-profit hospice, Crosby and her team put patients first. Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance carriers have provisions for hospice care. Other costs, including care for uninsured and underinsured patients and the agency's extensive bereavement offerings, are managed through philanthropy. "Many of our donors have experienced our care firsthand," says Crosby. "They understand our care's positive impact on patients, caregivers, and families."

Certified in 1991, East End Hospice has provided invaluable services to over 17,000 terminally ill patients and their families. A unique, interdisciplinary team of nurses, social workers, volunteers, and hospice aides are available 365 days a year. Most patients receive care at home; however, East End Hospice's Kanas Center for Hospice Care in Westhampton Beach is a haven when pain or symptoms require round-the-clock nursing care. The Kanas Center is Eastern Long Island's only dedicated hospice facility and accepts patients from as far as the five boroughs and Florida.

"Many Americans prefer to die at home, and we want people facing serious illnesses to know it's possible," says Crosby. "The societal benefit extends far beyond the patient, providing families with a sense of peace during their loved one's passing."



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