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Use of Volunteers in Hospital-Based Palliative Care

The mission of our Volunteer Palliative Partners Program, led by Volunteer Services, is to provide healing and hope to enhance the experience of palliative care patients and family members, through the use of supplementary specialty services.



Timeline / Program Implementation:

- + Needs identified – staff, physicians, personal experience
- + Community relationships characterized, cultivated and advanced
- + Services identified; processes of delivery developed
- + Volunteer selection, education and training
- + Volunteer / patient / family evaluation for program improvement

Characteristics of Successful Volunteer Palliative Partners:

- + Committed, compassionate, caring, empathetic person
- + Non-judgmental interactions
- + Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- + Enjoys direct patient care
- + Committed to providing confidential, inclusive and accessible services
- + Completion of palliative care training program

Activities of Volunteer Palliative Partners:

- + Obtain patient condition report
- + Visit palliative care patients and families
- + Provide DVD education support and informational brochure
- + Provide support through active listening and positive interaction
- + Distribute comfort snack packs
- + Provide oral care, hand / foot massage
- + Music therapy
- + Offer comfort items: puzzles, playing cards, hand games
- + Assist social workers
- + Spiritual support for patients and families
- + Provide bereavement beverage and snack cart
- + Help create legacy thumb-print craft
- + End-of-life education and support
- + Provide death bed vigil
- + Make bereavement calls
- + Send sympathy card and *My Friend, I Care* grief experience booklet
- + Provide on-call services as needed