



## **November Is National Hospice/Palliative Care Month**

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### **President Bush Signs National Hospice Month Proclamation as NHPCO Reports Consistent Growth in Patients Served**

(Alexandria, Va) – In a proclamation issued from the White House, President Bush declared November 2007 as National Hospice Month. This is the 29<sup>th</sup> consecutive year November has been designated as a national month honoring hospice, reports the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO).

The proclamation reads in part: "Hospice care professionals and volunteers are answering a timeless call to love their neighbors as themselves. During National Hospice Month, we recognize these individuals for their strength and compassion. Their efforts make our country a more loving and caring place." Read the President's proclamation online at the [White House Web site](#).

NHPCO reports that 1.3 million people with life-limiting illness received care from the nation's 4,500 hospice providers last year. This represents continued growth in both patients served and number of providers. Approximately 35 percent of all deaths in the US were under the care of a hospice program.

Additionally, the top five diagnoses among hospice patients reported by NHPCO show the continued trend of less cancer patients among those served. The top five diagnoses seen in hospice for 2006 are as follows:

- Cancer 44.1 percent
- Heart Disease 12.2 percent
- Debility 11.8 percent
- Dementia 10.0 percent
- Lung Disease 7.7 percent

The true value of hospice goes deeper than statistics and is reflected in NHPCO's theme for National Hospice Palliative Care Month 2007, *It Must Be Love*. Throughout the month of November, hospice and palliative care organizations across the nation are

hosting activities to educate the public and other healthcare professionals about the benefits of hospice and palliative care.

“The philosophy at the heart of hospice and palliative care is about so much more than what’s commonly seen in conventional medical care. It’s about providing solutions for difficult times when hope is in question, it’s being close in a time of fear, it’s laughter in the midst of tears, it’s about dignity, humanity, and hope,” said J. Donald Schumacher, NHPCO president and CEO. “When you look at all that makes up hospice and palliative care, and the difference that care makes in the lives of more and more Americans, you begin to understand its contribution in the healthcare continuum.”

Hospice is not a place but a philosophy of care created to help people live with dignity, comfort, and compassion at the end of life. Palliative care works to bring this philosophy of care to people earlier in the course of a serious illness.

Hospice and palliative care programs provide pain management, symptom control, psychosocial support, and spiritual care to patients and their families. They also serve as valuable community resources about care options.

Additional information about hospice, palliative care, advance care planning, and talking with loved ones about these important issues is available from NHPCO’s Caring Connections. For information, to find a local hospice, or to get a free state-specific advance directive form, visit [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) or call the HelpLine at 800/658-8898.