

Good morning, my name is Karen Greenwood. I am a team member with Peace Hospice of Montana. Our office is located in Great Falls however we serve 5 counties. These counties include: Pondera, Toole, Teton, Choteau and the Cascade areas.

Hospice is a special way of caring for people with terminal illnesses and their families. We emphasize symptom management and pain control, we treat the patient and family in a holistic manner and we encourage our people to live life to their fullest. Our emphasis at Hospice is on care, not cure.

Care is provided by the Hospice team. This team is comprised of a physician, pharmacist, nurse, social worker, chaplain, home health aide, children's bereavement specialist, and volunteers. These care providers understand the needs of our patients. They plan a program of care and services along with the patient based on their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs. Our mission at Hospice is to care for the terminally ill patient and their family in such a way as to create comfort, care and meaning in the home environment.

In the year of 2004, Peace Hospice was honored to serve 399 patients. Reimbursement for these services came through Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance carriers, and sometimes, private pay. Last year 11 of those patients were on Medicaid and they received comfort and compassion at a time when they needed it the most. Without you and your commitment to Hospice, these individuals and their families would not have had the support they require during their final stage of life.

Last year we received a special blessing from you. Peace Hospice of Montana was honored in receiving 2 Medicaid wavier slots in our inpatient residential facility. This facility has 12 beds. Each patient has their own room, equipped with the comforts of home and they are given 24 hour nursing care. The care provided in this 12 bed home is compassion, support, and we are focused on comfort and quality of life. Through the Medicaid wavier program, 6 patients had their last days filled with comfort, compassion, and dignity at a time when that's what matter the most.

Today I brought with me a special guest, on tape, and she is presently on a wavier slot. She could not be here with us in person due to her condition. Instead she would like to share with you her feelings about the Peace

Hospice Residential Facility in Great Falls. She is 78 years old and she was diagnosed with lung cancer 2 ½ months ago. The patient was asked if it was difficult to come to the Peace Hospice House so close to the holidays:

"I have all my family here, majority of them here in Great Falls and it made the transition a lot easier. It is something I have been expecting because I knew that I wasn't doing what I should be doing. I was falling off and on...unsteady on my feet and not eating correctly. I just knew that pretty soon I will have to leave my place and Dr. Harrer said I don't want you to be alone anymore."

"You were living by yourself?"

"Yes. At the Sunshine Village Apartments."

"What did you think when you first walked into the doors here?"

"I could not get over how beautiful and how tranquil, serene.... I feel very lucky to be here. I really do because this is one beautiful place and it does not remind you of a hospital. The nurses are the same way with me. Everybody treats you so normal and so wonderful and giving. Anything you want you just speak up and you get it. So it's been a pleasant environment for me. Have you ever seen anything so pretty as this place? I can't get over it. Everybody that walks in...all my family that has walked in... are so happy that mom is here. They are really happy about that..."

Without Medicaid wavier this patient and many others would be experiencing a terminal illness without the love and support of a 24 hour caregiver. Thank you for making this a possibility for our lower income patients who cannot not afford the room and board charge of \$151.70 per day at our residential facility. Presently, Medicaid wavier covers \$60.00 per day if you can somehow increase this reimbursement, Peace Hospice of Montana in Great Falls would be very grateful.

Cicely Saunders, our founder of the Hospice movement says "You matter because you are you. You matter to the last moment of your life, and we will do all we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.