



For more information:

Rachel Withers

Cell: 423-326-9443

Office: 423-892-4289 ext. 10109

Email: Rachel_Withers@hospiceofchattanooga.org

Hospice of Chattanooga Receives \$30,000 Grant to Improve Care for Veterans

One of Only Eight Hospices Nationwide Awarded This Funding

CHATTANOOGA, TN, January 19, 2010--- Hospice of Chattanooga is one of eight hospices nationwide awarded a \$30,000 grant from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. The funding is designated for programs that give homeless and rural veterans better access to quality healthcare. This \$30,000 grant will allow Hospice of Chattanooga to continue operating its toll-free, Veterans Affairs Hotline.

This is the second year in a row Hospice of Chattanooga has received grant funding for veterans programs from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. This year, Hospice of Chattanooga was selected from a highly competitive field of applicants, based on the success of current veterans outreach.

"Hospice of Chattanooga was awarded a grant in this, the second year of NHPCO's program, because of the great strides they've made during the previous year in improving veterans access to healthcare," said J. Donald Schumacher, NHPCO President and C.E.O."

"Hospice of Chattanooga works extremely hard to make sure veterans receive the quality healthcare they deserve," said Rev. L. Clark Taylor, C.E.O. of Hospice of Chattanooga. "Receiving this grant for a second year in a row means our efforts have been recognized on a national level, and that is very exciting."

Hospice of Chattanooga established its toll-free Veterans Affairs Hotline in early 2009. Hospice of Chattanooga's social workers answer the telephone calls and help local veterans enroll in the VA health system. The hotline is intended to

streamline the enrollment process, which is often lengthy and confusing at the end of life. On average, 25 to 30 veterans call Hospice of Chattanooga's Veterans Affairs Hotline each week. Both U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) and U.S. Congressman Zach Wamp (R-TN, 3rd District) have called the hotline "a critical resource at a critical time," and recorded television commercials endorsing it.

Many Americans don't know 50,000 veterans die each month, accounting for 28 percent of all deaths in the United States. Nearly 40 percent of all veterans enrolled in the VA live in rural areas, where there are frequent shortages in physician services. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 200,000 veterans are without shelter nationwide on any given night.

"A lot of veterans simply don't know end of life care is available to them," explained Sherry Campbell, Hospice of Chattanooga's Veterans Grant Coordinator. "The hotline gives us a chance to tell veterans about their options. No one should reach the end of life alone, afraid, or in pain."

The veterans grant has also allowed Hospice of Chattanooga to form several important partnerships with other veterans' advocacy groups in Southeastern Tennessee and Northwestern Georgia. Hospice of Chattanooga has partnered with Chattanooga Homeless Coalition, Homeless Healthcare Network, and the Community Kitchen to set up a respite care center on East 11th Street. The respite center gives the homeless population in need of in-patient medical attention a place to stay on a temporary basis. Hospice of Chattanooga hopes to build on these partnerships in 2010.

Hospice of Chattanooga was founded in 1981. It is the largest not-for-profit hospice in this region, serving more than 550 patients each day. Each year, Hospice of Chattanooga provides more than half a million dollars in unfunded care to families in both Tennessee and North Georgia. For more information about Hospice of Chattanooga, visit www.hospiceofchattanooga.org.

###