



***Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester Announces Expanded
Pediatric Palliative Care Program***

Comfort Crew Offers Peace of Mind to Westchester Families

White Plains, NY – (Jan. 20, 2014) – Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester (HPCW), with more than 20 years of experience providing end-of-life and care services to the community, announced the recent expansion of its pediatric palliative care program now named Comfort Crew. The not-for-profit healthcare agency will be the first to provide a formalized palliative care program in Westchester County designed specifically for children.

Changes to New York Medicaid, including Medicaid-managed care, will cover all medically necessary curative services, in addition to palliative care, for children under 21 who receive hospice care. This change in coverage policy complies with recent changes to the federal Affordable Care Act entitled Concurrent Care for Children.

After learning that 82 of the 94 deaths of children in Westchester County in 2010 were the result of a life-limiting disease or neurological condition, HPCW spent more than a year hosting open forums with local pediatricians, healthcare providers and children's hospitals to discuss the options available to families. HPCW will continue to do so to further develop the Comfort Crew program. These conversations provide HPCW with key insights that contribute to the design of the Comfort Crew program.

The absolute need for this type of care in the Westchester community became clear to HPCW Executive Director Mary Spengler immediately and so the organization began intensive work to form Comfort Crew. This specially-trained team consists of pediatricians, nurses, social workers, spiritual care coordinators, home health aides, volunteers, expressive therapists, and grief and bereavement counselors.

"Comfort Crew works with the child's own pediatrician and specialists to create an individualized plan of care that ensures the highest quality of life for the child and their family," noted Spengler.

"This collaborative approach to care requires significantly more of time, energy and resources than traditional hospice and palliative care for adults," Spengler added. "However, the outcome can fulfill the physical, educational, social and spiritual needs of the child and their family while remaining sensitive to their developmental, personal, cultural and religious values."

Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is located at 311 North Street, Suite 204, White Plains, NY. For additional information, visit www.hospiceofwestchester.com or call 914.682.1484.

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About Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester:

Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is a private, not-for-profit healthcare agency that provides skilled, compassionate and comprehensive end-of-life home care to patients with any diagnosis and gives support to their families and loved ones.

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