



The Denver Hospice

“Our mission is to encircle those facing advanced illness with unprecedented levels of comfort, compassion, and expertise.”

This year, Denver Hospice celebrates 35 years of caring, and honors the 60,000 patients and their families that have been supported by their care since its founding. Recognized for innovation in palliative and end-of-life care, The Denver Hospice has won the 2013 Circle of Life Award – a national award presented by the American Hospital Association. The Circle of Life Award honors innovative programs across the nation that have made great strides in palliative and end-of-life care.

“[The Denver Hospice] exemplifies the best in health care – providing compassionate care and helping patients and families who are facing complex health challenges,” said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. “These innovative programs address critical needs so that patients can manage their health and live as fully as possible. They also reflect the different needs of their community as they provide the best care possible for those they serve.”

In 1978, former ICU nurse Carolyn Jaffe, along with Alice Demi, Barbara Milburn, and Dr. Peter Van Arsdale – each with a passion for providing quality end-of-life care – created Hospice of Metro Denver (HMD). The non-profit, caring for Denver’s terminally-ill patients and their families, began with a \$37,000 grant from the American Cancer Society and was housed in vacant nursing offices at Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Hospital. Louann Miller became Hospice of Metro Denver’s first volunteer, she continues to volunteer today. By 1991, HMD had admitted its 5,000th patient and had established a Special Services Program providing in-home care.

The words of founder, Carolyn Jaffe, continue to remind the caring staff of the powerful work that they do . . .

“Dying is never easy. Suffering and grief are always part of dying. But closeness and warmth can be there, too. If I’ve done my job well, I feel the warmth and the closeness. I share the laughter and love. I know I’ve made the time better. I’ve changed dying from something that’s feared, something that’s the enemy, to a natural part of life – maybe even a friend. The families tell me this, and I know it without their saying a word. This is powerful; it is beautiful.”



In 2007, Hospice of Metro Denver (HMD) changed its name to The Denver Hospice. The Denver Hospice Values Ladder – respect, safety, choice, compassion and efficiency, underlies all of the services provided by The Denver Hospice. These services have grown and advanced through the years, currently they provide care through:

Hospice Care
Palliative Care

Grief Services

Accessing Our Services

Our Inpatient Care Center

Integrative Therapies

Share Your Journey

Veterans Program



And, in 2012, Optio Health Services – a chronic care support program was founded. Optio coordinates care and services for people coping with chronic illness through a deeply integrated, personalized care plan and 24-7 support.

Demonstrating their deepening commitment to humanity, in 2009, The Denver Hospice spent \$1.6 million on indigent care and support services to help those who need it most in time of crisis; and in 2012, the Global Partner Award was presented to the organization by the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa for its work with Selian Lutheran Hospice Arusha, Tanzania.

The Denver Hospice, and its providers and supporters have been the recipients of countless awards in the 35-year history of the organization. Their truly caring commitment is unmistakable. “For 35 years, The Denver Hospice has been a leader in providing hospice and palliative care throughout the metro area. It is an honor to be recognized as a national leader”

Bev Sloan, president and CEO of The Denver Hospice.