

On-Call Hospice Care Supports Patients in Their Hour of Need

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Amanda Schrauben

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An extended care team is at the ready on evenings and weekends to evaluate needs and provide support for hospice patients and their loved ones. Photo courtesy of Emmanuel Hospice.

Each month we will be bringing you a newsletter piece from Emmanuel Hospice. Emmanuel Hospice has been recognized as one of the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For in West Michigan and in the nation. The article below was written by Emmanuel Hospice.

When it comes to providing care for its patients, Emmanuel Hospice doesn't differentiate weekdays from weekends or days from nights. It's a commitment that runs 24/7/365.

"We do whatever it takes to answer every need, and it doesn't depend on the hour of day," says Joyce Robinson-Beck, an extended care nurse for Emmanuel Hospice.

In her role, Robinson-Beck serves as the point person for a larger team of caregivers, who are also available overnight and on weekends. This includes registered nurses, social workers, aides, spiritual caregivers and even a nurse who can handle emergency admissions after-hours.

“When it comes to providing holistic care and compassionate support, we don’t pay too much attention to clocks and calendars,” says Sara Lowe, executive director of Emmanuel Hospice. “We are always at the ready to provide answers and care for our patients in their hour of need – whenever that may be.”

When someone calls the nonprofit provider of hospice care on an evening or weekend, they’ll speak to a registered nurse trained in triage, which is the ability to assign a degree of urgency to an illness or injury. That nurse then communicates with other Emmanuel Hospice personnel, who then process the information and act accordingly.

Sometimes, the situation can be handled by a phone or video call. If a personal visit is warranted, Robinson-Beck says there’s never any hesitation, even if it means repeated visits during the same night.

“Just the other weekend, we had a lady who had fallen to the floor and her husband couldn’t lift her,” Robinson-Beck says. “I went there in an instant and helped get her up. It was two in the morning, but that’s not a factor. You just go.”

She and other members of the extended care team might personally visit up to two dozen or more patients on any given weekend, tending to everything from a need for supplies to altering medications to coaching family members willing to help as caregivers.

“Extended care that provides services at night and on weekends is, to me, the root of what our team depends on,” Robinson-Beck says. “Everybody expects people in place from 9 to 5, but we are always trying to go the extra mile in those so-called off hours as well. It’s our goal to fulfill every need, no matter the time.

“And if you need us there in person, we’re on the way.”

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