

## **MAGIC VALLEY PALLIATIVE CARE COALITION**

*Spanning the Continuum of Holistic End-of-Life Care*

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### **PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

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### **Palliative Care Coalition Receives Major Grant from Glanbia**

Glanbia Foods has recognized the important work being done by the Magic Valley Palliative Care Coalition to expand awareness of the end-of-life care options available to Idaho residents. During its annual awards banquet on Aug. 15 in Twin Falls, Glanbia donated \$10,000 to the Palliative Care Coalition to recognize the work the coalition is doing to educate the public about end-of-life care options, as well as facilitating groups to assist professional caregivers who help patients deal with life completion issues.

“We are so appreciative of Glanbia’s great generosity in supporting the work we are doing to improve the quality of the individual’s last phases of life,” said Jamie Kelley, LCSW, co-founder of the Magic Valley Palliative Care Coalition. “With the funds provided by Glanbia, we will be able to dramatically expand our awareness efforts in the community, as well as offer support for families that may be caring for a loved one who has a serious illness or life threatening condition

The coalition is one of many throughout the country developed to bring the message of compassionate end of life care to the public. “The goal of palliative care is to improve the quality of life for the seriously ill individuals and their family through relief of suffering, control of symptoms, and restoration of functional capacity while remaining sensitive to personal, cultural, and religious values, beliefs, and practices,” said Kelley. Patients have a choice of treatment options with palliative care ranging from curative to comfort care, and no specific therapy is excluded from consideration. Palliative Care differs from hospice care in that palliative care is available to anyone with a serious illness regardless of life expectancy, while hospice focuses

on relieving symptoms and providing support for patients who have a life expectancy of months, not years.

“Palliative care affirms life and regards dying as a natural process that is a profoundly personal experience,” said Sheryl Ford, LMSW, co-founder of the Palliative Care Coalition. “Palliative care guides patients and their families as they make the transition through the changing goals of care, and helps the seriously ill person who wishes to address the issues of life planning, completion and closure. It is wonderful that Glanbia has recognized how important it is to promote compassionate end-of-life care for people in Idaho.”

The Palliative Care Coalition is promoting several upcoming educational opportunities that are open to healthcare providers and the public.

On October 4 from 12:30 - 1:30 pm, Kevin Clifford MD, a Palliative Care Specialist from St. Al's will be presenting a Grand Rounds on "Developing a Hospital-Based Palliative Care Program". This program is for physicians. Later that afternoon from 3-5 pm, Dr Clifford will be presenting an open forum for community healthcare providers. The forum topic is " Strategies for Assisting Physicians with End of Life Care." Both programs will be held in the Sage Room in the MVRMC Education Building. There is no charge. For registration information contact 737-2007.

The Magic Valley Palliative Care Coalition will also be hosting two meetings this fall that will deal with the ethical and medical questions faced by people who are nearing the end of their lives and their families. The meetings are free and open to the public.

On October 5, Dr. David McClusky will present "Facing a Serious Illness" a general overview of the end-of-life care options available to patients and families. Also during the meeting, the latest Advanced Directive changes for the state of Idaho will be discussed. The long legal and ethical battle that raged over comatose Terri Schiavo in Florida earlier this year has heightened awareness of the importance of addressing end-of-life issues before a situation arises. An Advance Directive planning packet will be available to all interested parties. This program will be held at the College of Southern Idaho's Taylor building, Room 277 from 7-9 pm.

In November, Dr. Elizabeth Sugden will present “Suicide and the Elderly” at the Magic Valley Palliative Care Coalition meeting. The meeting will be held on Nov. 3 from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. This program will be held at the College of Southern Idaho's Desert Building, Room 113.

A college-level course, “Psychosocial Issues at the End of Life,” is being offered through the College of Southern Idaho during the upcoming spring semester 2006. The course is designed to increase the healthcare practitioner’s knowledge of the concerns that affect patients and families at the end of life. The course will provide skills, information, and experience to

assist healthcare providers in becoming more comfortable personally and professionally when working with patients and families during a critical time in the life process. The two-credit class is part of the Allied Health program (Allh199) and meets one Friday evening and Saturday per month. Class dates are January 20/21, February 10/11, March 10/11 and April 7/8. For more information, call Jamie Kelley at 737-2501.

The Magic Valley Palliative Care Coalition is available to offer presentations to local service clubs and organizations. For more information about presentations or Palliative Care Coalition activities, contact Jamie Kelley at 737-2501 or Sheryl Ford at 733-2274, or visit the Idaho state coalition website [www.abetterwaycoalition.org](http://www.abetterwaycoalition.org).

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