

Five Compelling Reasons to Choose a Non-Profit Hospice



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Hospice of Cincinnati (HOC) was created 40 years ago to fill the need for care at end of life that was simply not available in our city at that time. What began as a non-profit service to our community remains the only not-for-profit hospice serving the broad community today.

This week, a national for-profit hospice was fined \$75 million for Medicare fraud by the Department of Justice under the False Claims Act. There is a difference between for-profit and not-for-profit hospices. You should know the difference.

Both for-profit and non-profit hospices are required to provide the same core services to patients, but there are significant differences between the two beyond providing the same core services to patients. If you or a loved one are searching for a hospice provider, here are five reasons why you should consider choosing non-profit care:

1. **Non-profit hospices are mission-driven, not profit-driven.** HOC's only mission is serving our patients and community. As a non-profit, HOC does not have shareholders, and all money earned by HOC goes back into the organization to improve patient care. "Being a non-profit allows us to put patients first, above all else," says Sandra Lobert, CEO of Hospice of Cincinnati. "This means that all of our resources go into providing quality care and support programs for patients and their loved ones." An example is care that is provided above and beyond what Medicare requires—like holistic services such as pet, art, music and massage therapies and inpatient care centers that serve to manage symptoms or give respite to families.
2. **Research shows that non-profit hospices offer 14% more nursing visitsⁱ**, and provide more intensive care services (like care in inpatient care centers), than for-profit hospices. The majority of hospices (62.8%) are for-profit and only one in four hospices offer inpatient care centers.ⁱⁱ Medicare reimbursement often falls short of covering the costs of this level of care. HOC believes that the community deserves inpatient care that is specifically designed to meet the needs of hospice patients, and offers four homelike inpatient care centers in Blue Ash, Hamilton, Anderson and North College Hill. Inpatient care is provided when symptoms cannot be managed in another setting like home or long-term care.
3. **Our leaders and care team are members of our community and committed to the highest quality care for our patients.** HOC was founded by people who understood the unique needs of our community. Our leadership is local, and all members of our Board of Trustees are volunteers who represent the area's leading health care systems and businesses, as well as the community at large.

4. **Our community actively supports us, allowing us to do even more for patients.** As a non-profit, we benefit from the support of generous donors and more than 550 volunteers, allowing us to provide a wider range of services. For example, through the Goldstein Family Grief Center and Fernside—A Center for Grieving Children, HOC offers the most comprehensive grief support programs in the area – all free to anyone in the community, regardless of whether their loved one was cared for by HOC. The grief services we provide to the community are above and beyond what is provided for under the Medicare hospice benefit.
5. **As a non-profit, our goal is to provide services to all patients, regardless of their ability to pay.** Medicare, Medicaid and most major insurers cover hospice care, but if someone doesn't have coverage or the ability to pay, we will work with them to provide the best possible end-of-life care. Hospice of Cincinnati provides nearly \$1million in charity care every year, further demonstrating our commitment to our community.

In his book, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization*, financial guru Peter Drucker writes that the key difference between non-profit organizations and businesses is “the financial bottom line.” For HOC our bottom line is the patient and we have the best interests of the community at heart. Today, we have more than 550 employees, are served by more than 550 volunteers, and care for an average of 700 patients every day.

“We remain focused on our mission of creating the best possible and most meaningful end-of-life experience for all who need care and support in our community,” says Lobert. “We put patients over profits every day. We always have, and we always will.”

ⁱ *Paying the Price at the End of Life: A Consideration of Factors that Affect the Profitability of Hospice*, O'Neill, Ettner, Lorenz 2008 Journal of Palliative Medicine, Vol. 11, No. 7

ⁱⁱ *NHPCO Facts and Figures: Hospice Care in America. Alexandria, VA: National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, September 2017.*