



campus hospice services are also part of its mission.

“Someone doesn’t even have to be in a McGregor facility to receive McGregor Hospice,” says Rolen, referring to its description as “a special kind of caring.” “We have contracts with other facilities throughout Greater Cleveland. We are also always willing to entertain a one-time contract with a facility or work with individuals and their families to offer support and advocacy in their home or home of a family member or friend. The latter does not require a contract.

“Each individual’s journey is different. Our philosophy is to meet them where they are in every sense and move forward in the direction they want that journey to go,” adds Rolen.

Hospice support services can include pain and symptom management, medication management, medical supplies, respite care for caregivers, 24/7 support, bereavement support for 13 months following the death of a loved one and more.

The Hospice Team at McGregor consists of physicians, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, hospice aides, social workers, counselors, chaplain/spiritual counselors, pharmacists, volunteers and others who may be needed. Those individuals also may be called upon to be part of several auxiliary hospice services. That includes the McGregor Bridge program, which is for those not yet eligible for hospice.

“McGregor Bridge is an alternative for people with life-threatening diseases who aren’t quite ready for the hospice level of care. In the Bridge program, people may pursue curative treatments for their disease and will have team support in identifying what they need to focus on, for example education related to disease progression and advanced directives,” says Rolen. “We can help people understand what to expect as their disease progresses, and what they should or want to focus on. When we see more acceptance of their end-of-life journey, we can move these individuals into McGregor Hospice where they can continue to find comfort and care.”

“I don’t think a lot of people realize hospice is a benefit. It allows the person to spend more quality time with their family and friends. It can mean decreasing trips to the hospital.”

— PENNI-LYNN ROLEN

In keeping with McGregor’s belief of a “boutique style hospice,” McGregor Bridge and social workers can help individuals connect with someone who can assist not just with health issues, but with financial and legal concerns, as well.

“The sooner you can establish a relationship with someone and the family, the better,” says Rolen. “That way the interdisciplinary team gets to know everyone and really understands what the individual wants. Also, if we get to someone too late, it’s difficult to do legacy work with them, and that’s often important to the individual and the family. How does someone want to be remembered? How do family members want to remember that person?”

She notes that McGregor’s Memorable Moments program is aimed at coordinating events and activities, including special birthday parties, that can be especially moving and appreciated by terminally ill individuals.

“Having discussions earlier with people who are managing life limiting diseases allows the team to support the individual to plan their end-of-life journey,” says Rolen. “We need to get health providers to refer individuals sooner so hospice can provide necessary support.”

We Honor Veterans is a recognition program focused on those servicemen and women who have “sacrificed so much to keep all of us free and our liberties intact,” and who are receiving McGregor Hospice or McGregor Bridge assistance. The McGregor team particularly understands the devastating

effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that some veterans face, sometimes months, years or even not until the end-of-life period. Depression, irritability, shame, anger and other emotions may be common. Support services associated with McGregor Hospice can help vets and their families deal with PTSD at this challenging time.

The We Honor Veterans program awards Certificates of Appreciation and a small token gift, such as a cap, to the veterans in hospice. Journals are also provided to help the veteran and their family record memories; they can be used for anyone, not just vets.

McGregor Hospice has been honored for its end-of-life services by Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP), an independent, nonprofit accrediting body for home and community-based health care organizations. CHAP was created in 1965 as a joint venture between the American Public Health Association and the National League for Nursing. CHAP standards exceed minimum state and federal guidelines and has “deemed authority” granted by Medicare and Medicaid Services. (Basically, that determines which agencies meet the standards, allowing government payment.)

“McGregor Hospice received full accreditation in 2022, the most recent evaluation,” according to Rolen. “The next review is in three years. Through CHAP, we are able to demonstrate that we meet and exceed standards and that those we care for come first.”

Referrals to McGregor Hospice can be made by an individual themselves, a family member, physician, a member of the clergy or others with an interest in someone’s welfare who they think might qualify for services.

“I really like the McGregor community. The Hospice Team and I hope to add peace and comfort to people in their final days,” says Rolen. ■



PENNI-LYNN ROLEN