

30 YEARS OF HOSPICE CARE IN NORTHERN COLORADO

We're Growing, We're Changing and So Is Our Name

**Celebrating an Enduring Commitment to
Hospice Care for the Community**

Pathways Programs for Grief and Loss Offer Support



HOSPICE PROMOTES COMFORT CARE

at End of Life Cycle by Kay Rios



Hospice of Larimer County (HLC) has a living, breathing mission, says its Chief Executive Officer Evan Hyatt. “The organization is very mission driven and that’s what holds us together from the Board of Directors through to the staff and to the volunteers. It is a guiding principle for everyone who works here.”

That mission honors every moment of life by providing specialized compassionate, comprehensive care for those affected by advanced medical conditions and by offering support for those who are grieving.

“We believe that the care at the end of your life should be at least as good as the beginning of your life.”

With that as an underlying theme, the staff and volunteers at HLC offer a variety of services designed to help patients and their families through the last cycle of life. Those services range from on-call 24/7 nursing care, medical equipment and supplies, social services and counseling, to spiritual care, programs for grief and loss, and community education. The HLC staff includes 130 medical, social work, counseling, administrative, financial, marketing and fundraising professionals who are assisted by more than 200 active volunteers.

HLC’s structure is driven by patient needs and by a growth in demand, Hyatt says. “There is a growth in the acceptance of hospice care. It is more often becoming looked at as a helpful option. And more families are using our services for a second and third time so acceptance is driving that growth.”

There is still, however, a need for outreach and education to let the community know about the benefits of hospice care, he adds. “We still need to break down those myths, misconceptions, and barriers. One of the biggest barriers is being able to accept that the end of life is part of the life cycle. We need to recognize that it is a stage and we are all going to go through it. HLC offers a means to go through that stage in a more comfortable and comforted way.”

HLC is broken into two distinct segments of support. Clients for the hospice care side are generated through referrals from physicians, nursing facility staff, and hospital discharge planners. Bereavement care, which falls under the Pathways programs, is open to anyone in the community who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

“We have five times the number of people that come in contact with our Pathways program than our hospice care,” Hyatt says.

HLC not only serves Larimer County, its area of operation also includes portions of Weld County including Windsor, Severance, Ault, Eaton, Timnath, Johnstown, and surrounding communities.

HLC has a physical presence in its administrative and business offices at 305 Carpenter Road in Fort Collins, at 1226 W. Ash Street, Suite B in Windsor, and in a seven-bed, Inpatient Care Center located on the third floor of the McKee Medical Center in Loveland. In ad-

dition, its staff and volunteers provide care within 13 skilled nursing facilities and 26 assisted living facilities throughout the community.

HLC’s funding comes from a number of revenue sources. It receives payment through Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance and client fees. But strong community support and active fundraising help fill in the gaps to a good degree. On top of the tax-deductible donations, HLC supporters come together each year for several standing events: Abby’s Signature Concert Series, the annual National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA)/Hospice of Larimer County Golf Benefit, the Debbie Boose Memorial Tennis Tournament and an annual wine tasting event, A Vintage Affair.

All money goes to support HLC’s programs and to accommodate the variety of needs within that realm of support. Whether, patients reside at home, in a long-term care facility, or an inpatient care center, hospice care is available. “We come to you wherever you are,” Hyatt says. “We’re available when and where you need it. And with bereavement care, we offer many ways to find support. We don’t call you one time and heal you because people grieve differently. We can help you find the best means for you.”

It goes back to that mission, he says. “Generally, we believe that the care at the end of your life should be at least as good as the beginning of your life.”

Name Change for Hospice of Larimer County by Kay Rios

A rose by any other name may still be a rose but, for an organization, that name becomes important in its effort to communicate with the public. For Hospice of Larimer County (HLC), the name just didn't tell the whole story, says Chief Executive Officer Evan Hyatt.

So a new name has been selected. Pathways Hospice becomes the official name as of November 5, 2008. "We offer so many things and we aren't just offering our services in Larimer County as the old name would suggest. It just seemed time for a name change that would more appropriately reflect who we are and where we are."

The new name, he adds, takes an existing theme and builds on it. "Our Pathways Programs for Grief and Loss have become very popular so we wanted to dovetail around that reputation. And it more clearly defines the organization as a whole."

The organization does offer hospice care for those terminally ill patients, but it also provides support services for families as well as bereavement options for those who have suffered a loss. In addition, HLC serves patients beyond Larimer County and is continuing to grow, serving many areas in Weld County as well. The name, Hospice of Larimer County, also gives the impression that HLC is a county organization, he says.

"We're a nonprofit organization and we rely on our donors and our ability to raise funds from the community. Being regarded as a county agency can hamper those activities that keep us alive."

The process for the name change began about two years ago when a marketing firm was hired to explore potential names that would best represent the organization. That agency, LightSource Creative Concepts, and HLC studied the names of over 3,500 hospice organizations across the nation. After researching and brainstorming over a period of several weeks, a list of several hundred possible name choices was created. By removing those names that didn't immediately establish HLC's distinguishing qualities, the list was reduced.

"The final name was selected with input from the community, staff, referral sources and everything kept leading us back to that name," Hyatt says. The rest is now history.



OUR MISSION:
Honoring every moment of life, Pathways Hospice provides compassionate, excellent, comprehensive care for those who have an advanced medical condition and those who are grieving.

OUR VISION:
Pathways Hospice is committed to be the region's preferred provider of hospice services through excellent patient care in all settings, and comprehensive grief support. We educate about end-of-life care, partner with caregivers, remain good financial stewards, grow to meet our community's needs, and strive to be an employer of choice.

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Hospice Celebrates 30 Years of Service by Kay Rios

With November designated as National Hospice Month, it's fitting that Hospice of Larimer County will celebrate 30 years in existence. In that time, Hospice has provided physical, emotional, and spiritual support to more than 6000 terminally ill patients and their families.



Dr. Jim Danforth, Medical Director Involved with Hospice of Larimer County since its beginnings in 1978



Hospice of Larimer County has had several logos throughout its 30-year history

Its quiet origins in October 1978 began with a compassionate group of Loveland nurses banding together to care for a coworker in the final stages of breast cancer. "There really wasn't an organized hospice in Loveland," says Dr. Jim Danforth, Hospice of Larimer County's assistant medical director. "They wanted to help her die at home so they formed an ad hoc volunteer group."

Danforth was in family practice at the time and the nurse was one of his patients. "That's really how I got involved."

The effort didn't end with her death, he says. "They continued to meet after she died because the community needed something like this and the group continued to provide services to patients in their homes. A group in Fort Collins started about the same time we started in Loveland."

Interest in hospice care was beginning to grow as Great Britain created freestanding inpatient facilities to provide comprehensive care to terminally ill patients. Information on those efforts crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the 1970s and medical thinking began to change.

Danforth witnessed the benefits of the hospice philosophy first hand as a resident at the University of Washington in Seattle. "I observed situations where patients were not part of the decision-making process in their own care and they were dying in hospital without an option. Then I had a patient about 85 years old with congestive heart failure. He was in a nursing home and tired of taking meds. He asked me what would happen if he just stopped taking them. I said, 'You will probably die.' He said, 'That's OK. I've written my life story, said goodbye to family. Can I just do that?' He just needed to know that he had that option. It was amazing to see the peace he found in that decision. So when this group started up in Loveland, I thought, this is something I want to support."

On February 3, 1979, the organization was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)(3) but both the Loveland and Fort Collins groups continued to operate informally and as volunteers until about 1982 when the federal government passed the Medicare Hospice Benefit.

"We were getting a little more sophisticated and a little more formally organized," Danforth says. "Then Medicare put new requirements in place and we felt we needed to meet those. That's when the two groups came together. That gave us the resources to pay CNAs, nurses, chaplains, and all the people on the team," he says.

In the early days, Danforth and Fort Collins family physician, Joe Lopez served as Medical Directors. "But it grew to where it was more of a full time job. We both also continued to have busy family practices, so it became apparent we needed a fulltime dedicated Medical Director." Dr. David Allen joined the staff as a full-time Medical Director Executive and Lopez and Danforth step in when Allen is not available. All

three are board certified in hospice and palliative care.

"Part of the reason Hospice has been so successful is that Board of Directors has been so creative in raising money in the community. Medicare and some private insurances pay for it but still doesn't cover the entire cost," Danforth says.

With those internal and community efforts, Hospice of Larimer County built its designated facility in 1996. Fall of 2001, a Care Center was added at McKee Medical Center with five beds. In 2005, a capital campaign raised money to complete an addition to house Pathways: Programs for Grief and Loss and a healing, walking labyrinth was added in the fall of 2005. More recently, in June of 2007, Hospice opened a branch in Windsor and, this past summer, the Hospice Care Center expanded to seven beds. "We have been fortunate to have active people in administration and on the Board of Directors who could move the organization forward in such a positive way," Danforth says.



Dr. Joe Lopez, Medical Director With Hospice of Larimer County since 1986



Dr. David Allen, Medical Director Executive With Hospice of Larimer County since 2002



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Community Support Keeps Hospice of Larimer County Viable by Kay Rios

Community support, generous donors and active fundraising activities provide a stable foundation for sustainability for Hospice of Larimer County (HLC).

“Without the generosity of our community, we couldn’t meet the demand for our services,” says Chief Executive Officer Evan Hyatt. “Of the people who enroll in our program, 90 percent have Medicare benefits. But those benefits only reimburse for basic services. Community donations help us enhance those services with things like the Pathways Programs For Grief and Loss. For example, we don’t charge for the grief counseling in the schools.”

Uninsured clients also require subsidy, he adds. “Last year, we served 23 people who had no insurance and didn’t qualify for Medicare or Medicaid. But we provided for them just like we would anyone else.”



A Memorial Tree at the Hospice Care Center displays the names of those who have received care from Hospice of Larimer County.

In 2007, HLC received gifts from more than 4,000 donors, helping to cover budget shortfalls and allow for enhancement of existing services. As a means of encouraging ongoing support, HLC has developed a number of ways people can make tax-deductible donations. Cash donations in any amount can, of course, be made directly to HLC. In addition, Memorial Bricks and Stones can be purchased in a loved one’s name.

“The memorial donations have grown with the number of patients,” Hyatt says. “We’ve also seen a maturation in the way donations are made. We now have an endowment in the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado (CFNC) so we are able to think about long-term sustainability. That was a big step for our organization.”

Through HLC’s Enduring Legacy Society fund, donations can be made through estate plans, bequests by will, retirement plans, remainder trusts, or gift annuities.

Another way to contribute to HLC is through its annual fundraisers. The annual Debbie Boose Memorial Tennis Tournament is held each June and the Hospice/NAIFA Golf Benefit tees off each August.

Another popular event, A Vintage Affair, was started by Dennis Dinsmore, managing partner for Wilbur’s Total Beverage. He says he formed the wine tasting extravaganza as a means for repaying HLC.

“When my mother was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, her wish was to stay in her own home. There was no way I could have done that on my own. Hospice stepped in and helped that happen. They were tremendous and she passed away getting her wish.”

Dinsmore held the inaugural Vintage Affair in 2001. “We’ve been able to raise \$65,000 through the wine tastings,” he says.

Dinsmore also hosts Hamburgers for Hospice several times a year. “Whole Foods donates the food and we hand out brochures so people can learn what Hospice is about.”

Another fundraiser, Abby’s Signature Concert Series, provides a benefit split between HLC and Respite Care. Christy French, driving force behind the Series, has been setting the concerts up for twelve years and has raised about \$150,000 so far. “We gave it an official name probably four years ago,” French says. The series is named after her daughter, Abby, who died in 2000.

It began as a Christmas concert for French, her mother, her husband’s mother, and their friends in 1996. About the third year, she says, “we decided to take an offering in the middle of the concert and donate the money to Hospice and Respite Care since they were so involved in our lives at that time.”

The concert took on a life of its own. “Soon we had 500 people. People were very generous and so willing to give to something that made a difference in our lives.”

HLC and Respite Care made a huge difference in her family’s life, she says. “We would have never made it without them.”



The Pathways Memorial Garden

As the years went by, the concerts grew and French, a classically trained pianist, added an Easter concert, then a fall concert and, most recently, a Piano Soiree in June. “It couldn’t be done by one person anymore so now we have a great committee that makes it happen,” she says.

The concerts pull in top talent from the area, names like Dave Beegle, Mark Sloniker and Dave Lunn, to create the music. “It’s wonderful to have other musicians in our community join me in giving of their talent and their time to benefit the agencies and the families in our community.”

For French, it’s an opportunity to give back to the two agencies that provided care for Abby. “I might not be able to write a \$10,000 check to them personally but I can put on an event where many people could take part in and then give 100 percent back to those agencies. It’s been a great partnership and a little unlikely. It’s brought a lot of people together for a great reason.”

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Pathways Programs Offer Means for Grieving by Kay Rios

The road through grief is a bumpy one with many curves and hills ahead. But Pathways Programs For Grief and Loss offer a variety of vehicles to help make the journey a little smoother.



The Pathways Grief and Loss Programs provides support, counseling and education to anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

“Loss and grieving are very complex,” says Nancy Jakobsson, Hospice of Larimer County (HLC) Pathways Services Director. “What we do is help people think about what they’re experiencing and about the taboos. We encourage them to talk about death and about what they feel.”

Pathways Programs feature a two-part focus. “The part that is common to all hospice operations is the supplemental support for the families whose loved one has died in our program. That continues for 13 months after the death,” she says.

That assistance comes in a variety of packages including support literature, follow-up phone calls, counseling and support groups. “They are all without fees if it is a Hospice family.”

The second part is offered to the entire community. “It involves counseling, support groups and an education program available to anyone who has had a death loss for any reason,” Jakobsson says.

Recognizing that while those who grieve may share similar emotions, there are also very distinct differences, the programs are varied to meet different needs. Everyone grieves in his or her own personal way, with individual intensities and in each person’s own time, the literature explains and Jakobsson reinforces that. “We have a series for adults who are newly bereaved and one for those who are farther down the line. We also have a group called ‘Writing Through Loss,’ where people can explore their grief through writing with the assistance of a grief counselor. There is also a ‘Following Image Group’ that offers visual exploration of loss through art.”

Other Pathways Programs target specific loss such as the HOPING program, which is designed for ‘Helping Other Parents in Grief’ and is aimed at pregnancy and infant loss. Many of the programs can be accessed at any time in the grief process since people mourn in different ways and at different times, she says. “It can be right away after the loss or it can be years after.”

The programs are also designed for all ages, she adds. “We have counselors trained to work with kids using play therapy, sand tray therapy, and art therapy. Kids often need a different modality to explain the grief. About 20 percent of our Pathways clients are kids.”

Most of the programs are held on-site but Jakobsson says there are two programs that are taken on the road. “We will do workshops for Grief in the Workplace to help people deal with the death of a coworker, for a coworker who has had a loss, or for a coworker who is terminally ill. Our Forgotten Mourners program offers grief support and education programs for deaths in a school, either a student or a teacher. We go into the school and offer grief counseling as a community service.”

Pathways also offers three off-site retreats each year. Two of the retreats are camps for kids. “We go to the Hearts and Horses in Loveland on a day-long retreat for kids twice each year. Then there is an Explorations retreat at Tamasag for adults once a year.

That retreat uses all the forms of creative therapy: art, music, movement and writing.”

The community support for Pathways has been incredible, Jakobsson says. “The walking labyrinth was all built through volunteer labor, and the material and landscaping were donated. The community also paid \$3 million to build this building where the Pathways Programs are housed.”

Many of the Pathways programs are cutting edge, she says. “Use of the arts is really well developed here and that’s just starting to be used in other parts of the country. It’s not about being an artist. It’s about finding another way to express your grief and transform it to be creative rather than destructive.”

That approach caught on quickly through Pathways. “The reception has been very good. When we started it four years ago, I didn’t think we would have this strong of a reception. But because we have had such wonderful response to our art programs, we’re presenting a conference in March geared to hospital workers and people working in therapy.” The conference is titled “Weaving the Arts,” and provides a hands-on experience for grief counselors, psychotherapists, students and other professionals involved with hospice care.

The bottom line for all of the Pathways efforts is finding the best means for helping people who are grieving, she says. “We often push people to ‘get over it,’ but we put them in a very lonely spot because of that. We’re trying to change those attitudes.”



These clay hands were created by a widow in a Pathways art therapy session as a visual expression and reminder of what supports her through her grief process.



This pastel drawing was created by a 10-year-old girl as an expression of her anticipatory grief in a family art therapy session at the Pathways Expressive Arts Program.

Volunteers Keep Hospice of Larimer County Strong by Kay Rios

Volunteers are the heart of Hospice of Larimer County (HLC), says Sarah Van Etten, Director of Volunteer Services.

“Because we are non-profit, we rely on volunteers in every department. The volunteers who provide support for our patients and families are often able to provide that extra attention and support that they might not otherwise get.”



A Hospice of Larimer County volunteer dances with Ray.

After her mom died in 1993, Dellenbach was looking for volunteer opportunities. “I knew I wanted to do it at Hospice.” She performed in a number of roles. “They had a flower shop in the Square so I did that one afternoon a week. Then I was a courier between Hospice and the doctors. Then they asked if I wanted to answer the phone so I’ve been doing that for about 12 years now and I really enjoy that.”

That role fits her well, she says. “I like being in an office with other women. I enjoy the camaraderie and it’s always an education. And I just feel that maybe I’m helping someone by answering the phone in a kind way and getting people the help they need when they need it.”

Dellenbach encourages others to get involved with HLC. “There are so many different kinds of opportunities. There’s active care: going out and working with the clients. Or there are special projects, mailings, the board, or office work. It isn’t a sad place,” she says. “It’s like any office. There is sadness but there’s also a lot of joy.”

Interested volunteers should contact Van Etten for additional information.

HLC volunteers offer a wide variety of support to clients and their families. They are companions who share a meal, read a book, help write a letter or spend quiet time. They supply relief for caregivers who may need a break. By offering household support such as light housekeeping, running errands or yard work, they help the patient remain independent for as long as possible. Volunteers can hold a hand, read a poem or offer a comforting presence at the bedside as the time of death nears. Or they can keep the HLC office running by answering phones, filing, and as general staff support. Many professionals also choose to offer their services by donating special skills that include hairdressing, or handyman services. Those with specific certification can also provide massage therapy, Reiki, reflexology or pet therapy.

Any interest level is welcome, Van Etten says. “I try to find a place for everyone that comes through the door. I work with their time constraints and skill sets. Often with patient care volunteers, the only required skills are the ability to be present and to listen. The key thing is to approach our patients and families as if you were a friend or neighbor without judgment and with an open heart.”

Volunteers not only choose what they’d like to do but when they’re like to do it. “There’s no minimum but generally they come in once a week for one to two hours depending on what they want to do. Some people want to do more.”

All HLC volunteers complete an orientation on the organization’s history and philosophy. Those volunteers who work with patients and families also complete a 20-hour training encompassing topics such as compassionate communication, specific diagnoses and symptoms, and patient confidentiality. All volunteers must also pass a background check and drug test.

Volunteers help make the organization work and there’s another aspect, says Van Etten. “It’s important to involve the community. That community involvement piece is what sets an organization apart.”

Mary Dellenbach is one of those involved community members. She has volunteered at HLC since 1994. She currently serves on the Board of Directors and, each Wednesday, she volunteers in the office. She has served as Board secretary and as Board president.

She was initially drawn to HLC because of her mother, Patricia Dellenbach. “My mom took care of the first hospice patient in Fort Collins. She thought so much of Hospice. Then my mom got cancer in 1987 and we used Hospice in the last part of her life. Whenever I called, they were always pleasant and I called a lot. No one was ever short with me or made me feel I was stupid or bothering them too much,” Dellenbach says.



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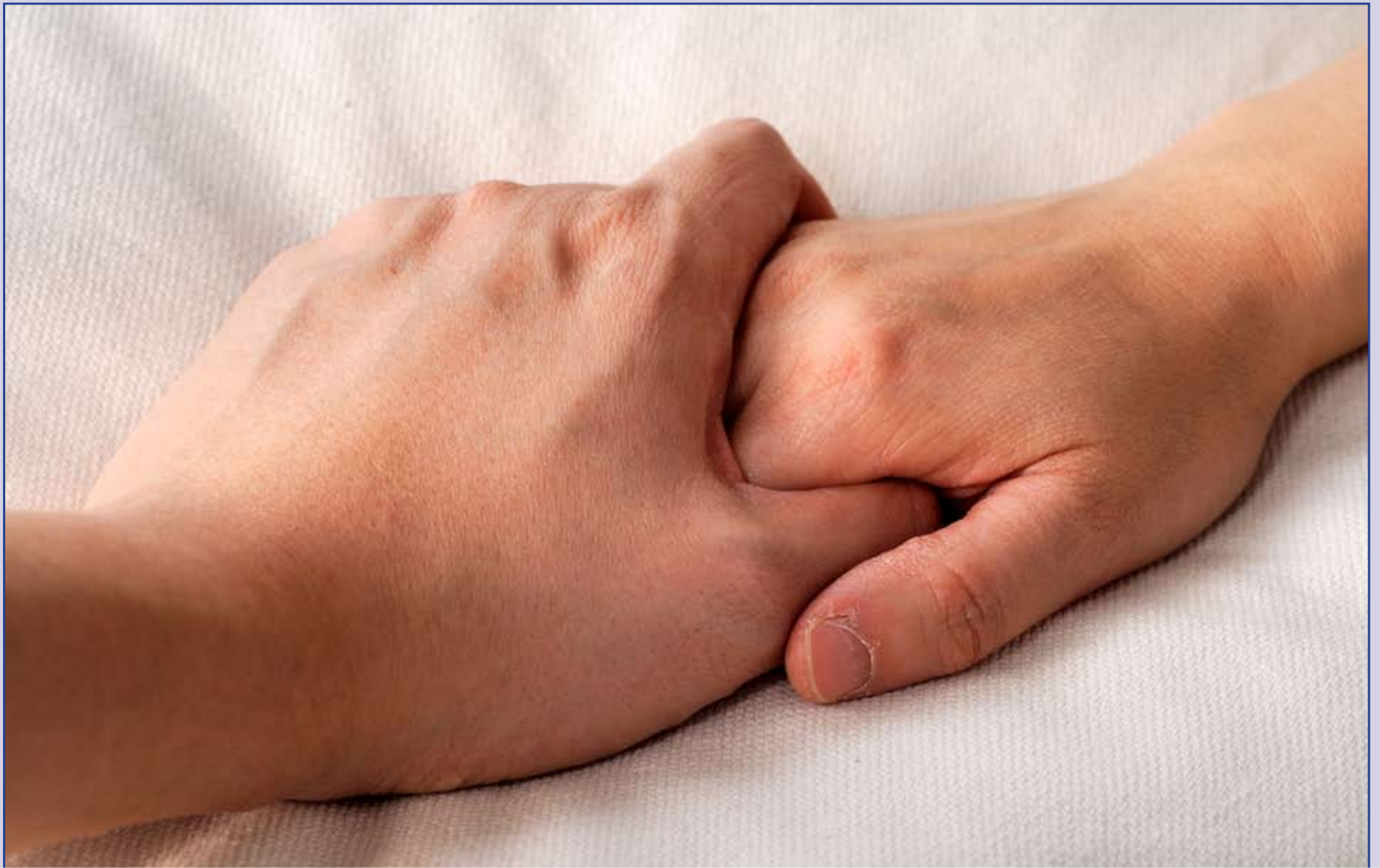
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