

NONPROFIT — HUMAN SERVICES

Dennis proud but humble about accomplishments

By Ivy Hughes
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FORT COLLINS — In 2005, Pathways Hospice — formerly known as Hospice of Larimer County — finished a \$3 million construction project that's allowed its nationally heralded grief-counseling program to expand. The program, which was once run out of a single room, now has private counseling rooms and a large meeting room that's used for educational purposes and semi-annual memorial services.

"The program, which is run by Nancy Jakobsson, is one of the premier programs in the country," CFO Dan Dennis said. "It's been recognized by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and others over the years. We're required to provide grief support but not to the extent that we provide it."

Unlike many other hospice-based grief programs, Pathways Hospice provides grief counseling to the community as well as its own patients. The Bereavement Counseling Center helps more than 5,000 community members deal with the loss of loved ones every year.

Dennis played an important role in the management of the capital campaign that led to the physical expansion of this program. But, as he does with each of his accomplishments, Dennis deflects acco-

lades and credits other Pathways Hospice employees for the success.

"I certainly did not have a primary role in it," Dennis said. "I just kind of kept track when it came to fundraising."

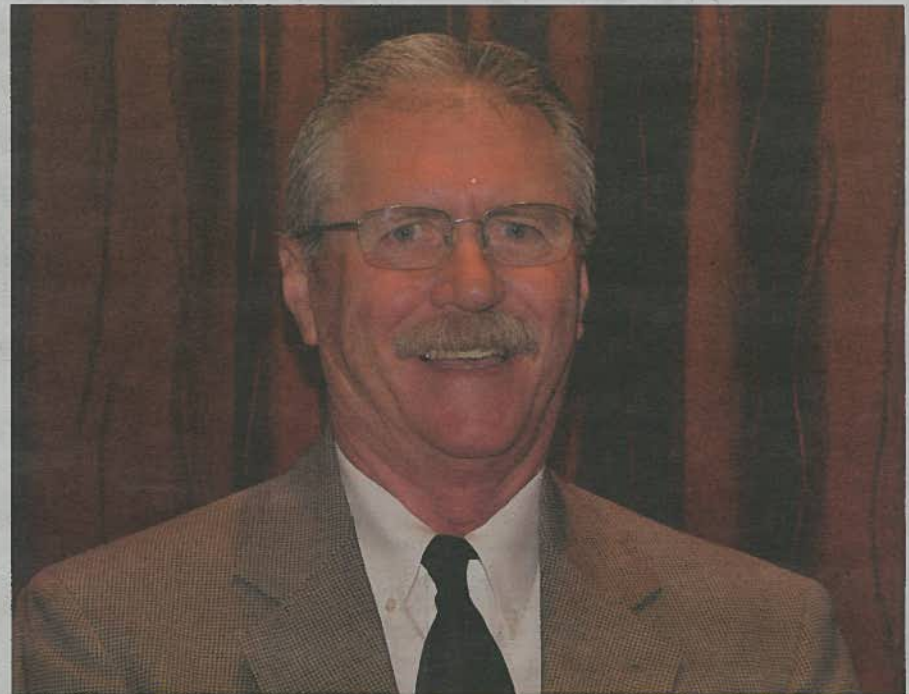
There's a lot to keep track of. Since Dennis joined Pathways Hospice in 2003, the nonprofit's annual budget has increased from \$5 million to just under \$10 million.

"We had some five-year goals but it wasn't just me," Dennis said. "The organization was starting to grow because the knowledge of hospice is increasing. We hope to continue going up a little bit every year."

More than 90 percent of Pathways Hospice patients are on Medicaid or Medicare. While the government reimburses the organization for services provided, depending on government funding lends a degree of uncertainty to the fiscal future of Pathways Hospice. This year, the service provider received a mere 0.3 percent increase in reimbursements.

"We're constantly looking at backup plans," Dennis said about the future of funding reimbursement. "A huge portion of our costs are people — nurses, social workers, chaplains — and we have to be careful that our staffing matches the number of people we have to take care of. That's something we're always watching and adjusting to."

Dennis joined Pathways Hospice after



Dan Dennis
Pathways Hospice

moving from his home state of Nebraska to Colorado, where both of his children went to college. He's worked in the health care field since 1980.

"I've worked for nonprofits for 30 years," Dennis said. "I think it's the best job there is because usually in a small organization you have multiple roles, which I certainly do. It's very satisfying but it's also very challenging."