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**PRESS
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Bells Ring to Raise Awareness for Hospice Care

(Southwest, Michigan) October 12, 2009 Bells will ring across Michigan on November 1, 2009 at noon in honor of all who have died under hospice care during the last year, and also in support for their families. This demonstration raises awareness for hospice care in our communities. Organized by the Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and local hospice organizations, church groups and faith communities that do not have bells are encouraged to raise awareness in other ways.

“Hospice is not a place but a philosophy of care that provides pain management, symptom control, psychological support, and spiritual care to patients and their families,” states Richard Grom, coordinator of the Hospice at Home Faith Community Outreach. “Hospice care is a comforting presence and a ministry for many.”

Considered to be the model for quality, compassionate care at the end of life, hospice care involves a team-oriented approach of expert medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support expressly tailored to the patient's wishes. Emotional and spiritual support is also extended to the family and loved ones. Generally, this care is provided in the patient's home or in a home-like setting operated by a hospice program. Medicare, private health insurance, and Medicaid in Michigan cover hospice care for patients who meet certain criteria.

Health care professionals who specialize in hospice and palliative care work closely with staff and volunteers to address all the symptoms of illness, with the aim of promoting comfort and dignity. An important part of hospice is that patients and their families help decide what care is right for them.

If you have any questions about hospice care, contact Hospice at Home at 1-800-717-3811, or go to www.hospiceathomecares.org, or visit the Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization Website at www.mihospice.org.

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