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# **Broward and Palm Beach County Hospice Organizations Sign Agreement to Form a Strategic Partnership**

Hospice by the Sea, Inc. (HBTS) and Hospice of Palm Beach County (HPBC)/Hospice of Broward County (H0BC) have signed an Agreement to combine the not-for-profit organizations and form a parent company that offers a coordinated, comprehensive continuum of care for those who struggle with progressive illness.

The volunteer community boards of both organizations unanimously support the effort, believing it will improve access to a broader array of well-coordinated care for the patients and families who need it most.

Both organizations have provided not-for-profit hospice care for over 35 years and each has added additional programs and services in response to community need. Many of these programs complement each other and collectively they will provide patients and families continuing support as their needs change. Hospice by the Sea offers home health agency services, caregiver support services and a more robust palliative care program. Hospice of Palm Beach County has a pharmacy program, a durable medical equipment service, central distribution facilities and a foundation that enables patient services over and above those reimbursed by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. This includes services such as music and other complementary therapies, along with providing charity care to a growing number of uninsured patients.

"In today's complex healthcare environment, any individual receiving health care at any level benefits from coordination of services," said Hospice by the Sea Board Chair Marian Pearlman Nease. "But a smooth, efficient and well-coordinated transition from one level of care to another is especially important for those with a progressive disease. By working together, these first-rate organizations can meet the varied and ever-changing needs of progressively-ill patients and their families in a seamless manner."

The chair of Hospice of Palm Beach County/Hospice of Broward County agreed. "Most of us who are affiliated with hospice have a personal experience with it," said John Marino. "We know what a blessing these services are and we want to make absolutely certain that anyone who could benefit from this kind of support has ready access. Both Boards believe this strategic partnership will make these services more efficient and more available to patients and families throughout Palm Beach and Broward counties."

All health care providers are already experiencing increased

regulation and decreased reimbursement. By combining operations, the new organization will capitalize on shared operational expertise and economies of scale (in areas such as pharmacy, durable medical equipment and general purchasing power) to proactively address these challenges. Combining human and financial resources will increase access to services to patients and families throughout Palm Beach and Broward counties.

The signing of this Agreement follows an extensive fact-finding due diligence process in which each organization and its advisors confirmed responsible fiscal management of the other. Leadership from both organizations are now developing an integration plan that should be fully implemented in 12 to 18 months. No reductions in workforce are planned at this time.

The two Boards will combine to form a 10 member Board composed of 5 representatives from each organization chosen by the two current Board chairs. Both CEOs will remain with the combined organization. Dave Fielding will serve as CEO and Paula Alderson will serve as President. The parent company (Spectrum Health, Inc.) will be renamed soon, but each of the Hospice programs will maintain their current names.

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