

# Hospice Malta

**Ms Anna ZAMMIT**

## HOSPICE MISSION STATEMENT

Hospice Malta is a voluntary organisation inspired by Christian values. It exists to provide and promote the highest standards of palliative care for persons with cancer, motor neurone disease and other terminal disease. It also aims to help and support their families.

## PALLIATIVE CARE IN MALTA

Palliative care in Malta is offered free of charge by Hospice Malta in the community, day therapy unit and through hospital support. There is also an in-patient palliative care unit in Boffa Hospital where patients are admitted for symptom control or during the terminal phase.

Hospice has been delivering palliative care support for cancer and motor neurone disease patients and their families for the past 25 years. Since 2010 the criteria for admission has been extended for end life respiratory, cardiac and renal disease.

This support is delivered through a multidisciplinary team consisting of doctors, nurses, social workers, physiotherapist, complementary therapist, chaplain, day therapy coordinator and care assistants. Delivery of services (Table 1) is also made possible with the backup of the council of management, administrative and fund raising team. Additionally, there are around 200 volunteers who, according to their skills, are involved in different departments.

On referral, patients are generally contacted within 24 hours and a primary assessment is carried out within the week. The patient and the family are assessed by the Hospice nurse to identify actual and potential problems from the physical, psycho-social and spiritual perspective. This enables the Hospice team to devise a care plan which needs to be followed up and reviewed according to the circumstances. Discussions regarding the care of the patient and place of death are highly significant as this will enable the hospice team, patients and relatives to

plan ahead, thus avoiding crises and multiple admissions to hospitals.

When the patient passes away the relatives are contacted and bereavement support offered. This support is provided through one to one sessions or within a group setting.

## CONCLUSION

Effective palliative care in the community will enhance the quality of life of patients and their families, avoid unnecessary hospitalisation and lessen the risk of complicated grief. This will enable people to remember this otherwise traumatic period in their lives with less negativity and more tranquillity.

**Table 1: Palliative care services provided by Hospice Malta**

### Palliative Care Services

Home Care
Day therapy
Hospital support
Loan of specialised equipment
Respite
Physiotherapy
Hydrotherapy
Complementary therapy
Psycho social support
Spiritual support
Bereavement support

**Ms Anna ZAMMIT**  
*Hospice Care Services Manager*

Email: [info@hospicemalta.org](mailto:info@hospicemalta.org)