



# Compassion Quarterly

## Connecting Community Through Care

### EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR PATIENTS WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS

### Introducing Home Health Plus

Home Health & Hospice of Dickinson County Launches Home Health Plus to Expand Support for Patients with Serious Illness  
Home Health & Hospice of Dickinson County is proud to introduce Home Health Plus, a supportive-care-focused enhancement to its existing home health services. While not a new service line, Home Health Plus strengthens and expands the care already provided, ensuring patients with chronic or serious illnesses receive an additional layer of guidance, symptom support, and care coordination.

Over the years, the landscape of health care has shifted significantly, especially in rural communities like Dickinson County. Increasing insurance restrictions, regulatory pressures, and shorter hospital stays have created a growing gap in services for patients who are not acutely ill but still require ongoing skilled oversight and support. This gap has become especially visible in rural areas, where access to specialty services is limited and patients are often discharged home sooner than ever before. Home Health Plus was redesigned specifically to bridge this gap, helping patients remain on services longer, manage chronic conditions more effectively, and navigate the health care system with greater ease.

This enhancement reflects a long tradition in health care of identifying unmet needs and creating solutions to better support patients. When Dame Cicely Saunders founded the first modern hospice model in London in the 1960s, it began not as a funded initiative but as a visionary idea rooted in compassion and necessity (Saunders, 1967). Her work transformed the way the world cares for people with serious illness and laid the foundation for the hospice and palliative care principles used today. In that same spirit, Home Health Plus was developed to address the growing needs of patients in our rural community and ensure they receive the support they deserve, right here in Dickinson County.

Home Health Plus integrates a supportive-care approach, offering specialized assistance that addresses symptom management, communication needs, and whole-person support. While grounded in principles commonly used in palliative care, the program is intentionally designed to be accessible and easy to understand for patients, families, and non-clinical partners.

Through the agency's affiliation with Memorial Health System, Home Health Plus strengthens collaboration between home-based care teams, hospital providers, and community resources. This alignment ensures smoother transitions, improved communication, and more efficient access to services across the continuum of care.

"Home Health Plus allows us to meet patients where they are and provide the extra support they need to stay safely at home," said Danielle Gantner, Director. "It enhances the care experience, reduces unnecessary hospitalizations, and empowers patients and families to feel more confident managing their health. Because of the support provided to our agency through Memorial Health System and Salina Regional Health Center, and through our continued affiliation, we are able to make this level of care possible for the patients and families we serve." Home Health Plus is now available to qualifying patients, with continued expansion planned over the coming year.

For more information about Home Health Plus or referral options, please contact:  
Danielle Gantner at 785-263-6630 or [dgantner@mhsks.org](mailto:dgantner@mhsks.org)



### At the Office

#### MHS EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Kesa Riffel, Office Coordinator, was recently recognized as Employee of the Month for Memorial Health System! This award, selected by the Employee of Choice committee, honors individuals nominated by their peers and managers for outstanding contributions.

This is Kesa's second time receiving this honor in her four years with MHS and Home Health and Hospice. She has become an integral leader in our department, keeping morale high with special events, ensuring the front office runs smoothly, and always finding a moment to put a smile on everyone's face.

Congratulations, Kesa! We are grateful for your dedication, positivity, and the vital role you play on our team.



# Dickinson County CARES

## DICKINSON COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Dickinson County has a wealth of resources available to support individuals and families. From housing and transportation to senior services, food programs, and education, there is so much in our community ready to help those who need it.

### Transportation:

Need a ride to medical appointments within Abilene? City transportation, provided through OCCK and funded courtesy of the Memorial Health Foundation, offers free rides to any medical appointment in town. Just call at least 48 hours in advance to schedule your trip.

### Meals on Wheels:

Within city limits, meals are delivered by wonderful local volunteers. Meals are delicious, nutritious, and can be tailored to dietary needs. For more information call Home Health and Hospice of Dickinson County 785-263-6630.

### Sharing Shelves:

Abilene is also home to Sharing Shelves, a free or donation-based store offering clothing and essential items to anyone in need.

You can learn more about these services and many others on the CARES Coalition of Dickinson County website: [www.caresresources.org](http://www.caresresources.org).



## Photo of the Year Cabinetgate 2025



Team work really does make the dream work. During an innocent lunch break, the cabinet in the office's kitchenette fell off the wall. The whole team came to help hold it up and clean up the broken cups and plates that had fallen out when the initial fall happened. No staffers were injured and our amazing maintenance team secured it firmly to the wall.

## Quotes of 2025

“I've learned to appreciate the small every day moments. Being present in the moment, and mostly focusing on the positive. What was my biggest fear, taking care of a child on hospice, was the most rewarding and his family taught me so much.”-Shannon Walters

“Not all days are good days, but they are all a gift.” -Kylie Engle

“You have to have humanity beyond the illness. Our patients are more than their diagnosis and information on a chart.”-Cece Murphy

“The value of listening. The most important thing I can offer isn't a treatment or an answer, but to listen to someone's story.”-Ashley Burlson

“The most important things in life aren't things.”-Kristen Hajek

“I have learned that everyone needs to be treated as though they are the most important person to you during that visit. You may be their only interaction that day, and they need to be better off after your visit than they were before.”-Leslie Welsh

“Time with family is the most valuable thing you'll ever have.”-Carson Carney

# Oxygen Masks and Caregiving: Putting Yourself First

We all know the cliché: in an airplane emergency, you must put on your own oxygen mask before helping anyone else. Caregiving works the same way. You must care for yourself before you can effectively care for someone else.

Here are 10 practical tips to help you prioritize your well-being while juggling the needs of a loved one:

## **1. Take regular breaks.**

It's okay to step away. Let a friend, family member, volunteer, or respite worker sit with your loved one while you shop, have lunch, or simply catch your breath.

## **2. Establish a support network.**

Friends, family, church members, neighbors, and your loved one's physicians are all part of your team. Lean on them.

## **3. Practice mindfulness and meditation.**

Even five minutes of slow breathing or quiet reflection can make a big difference in staying calm throughout the day.

## **4. Maintain a healthy diet.**

And no, three cups of coffee and a Pop-Tart don't count. Nourishing foods help keep your body and mind going.

## **5. Engage in regular physical activity.**

A walk, a quick gym session, or even dancing in the kitchen can release endorphins and improve your mood.

## **6. Get enough sleep.**

Easier said than done, but essential. If you're nodding off while tying a shoe, it's a sign your tank is too empty to keep going.

## **7. Pursue hobbies and interests.**

Read a book. Watch a show you enjoy. Dust off the sewing machine. Grab those woodworking tools and finally build that birdhouse. Your identity matters.

## **8. Talk to someone outside your normal orbit.**

Join a support group or connect with another caregiver. Sometimes it's comforting to talk to someone who truly understands and chooses to show up anyway.

## **9. Take time for yourself and your own needs.**

Attend your doctor appointments, eat a hot meal, get a haircut without guilt. You can't pour from an empty glass.

## **10. Set limits for what you can do.**

Some tasks are simply beyond what one person can manage, paid or unpaid. Resources exist for a reason; don't be afraid or too proud to use them.

---

HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE OF DICKINSON COUNTY  
PRESENTS

---

# *Caregiver Connections*

"A circle of understanding, strength, and renewal."

Join us for a welcoming space where caregivers can connect, share experiences, and find support. Each session offers encouragement, practical tips, and resources to help you navigate the challenges of caregiving.

**Join our Caregiver Support Group  
sessions on the first and third  
Tuesday of every month.**

**Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Location: 1111 N Brady St., Abilene**

*Caring for you.*

# What Happened in 2025?



# Share the Journey

It's human nature to seek connection. We all want to know that someone outside our normal orbit cares enough to check in and make sure we're doing okay. When someone enters hospice care, those connections often become even more meaningful. That's where our hospice volunteers make such a powerful difference. Our volunteers take time to sit with patients, listen to their life stories, ask thoughtful questions, or simply share quiet moments together. Sometimes, just being present is the greatest gift of all.

Not comfortable with patient interaction but still want to give back? We also offer in-office volunteer opportunities that support our hospice team behind the scenes. If you're interested in becoming a hospice volunteer, we'd love to hear from you.

📞 Contact: Taylor Knauss, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator  
📞 Phone: 785-263-6630



## When Time Isn't Enough

They say time heals all wounds—but what happens when it doesn't?

Grief doesn't always follow a predictable timeline. In our Hospice Bereavement program, we've seen that many families initially feel relieved, occupied with planning, or surrounded by out-of-town guests. The full weight of their loss often doesn't settle in until after the funeral, when the house is quiet again. For many, especially those who have lost a spouse, nighttime can feel the heaviest.

At Home Health and Hospice of Dickinson County, we want you to know you don't have to navigate this journey alone.

Beginning February 11th at 2 p.m., we will be offering a 13-week GriefShare support group, hosted at the Home Health and Hospice office in partnership with Community Bible Church. This program is designed to gently guide individuals through the grieving process, offering tools, understanding, and healthy ways to remember and honor loved ones.

If you or someone you know is struggling with grief, we're here to help—one step, one conversation, one moment at a time.

# Thank You to 2025 Our Donors

Sandy Abeldt	Mr. and Mrs. Calvin David	Dawn and Brian Holloway	Claudia Nelson	Janice Spillane
Abilene Physical Therapy	Arthur Davidson	Holm Automotive Center	Patricia Nelson	Julie and Keith Sprengle
Agri Trails Coop	S or H Degarmo	Dorothy Holmstrom	Sally Nelson	Gail Ann Stein
Kenneth Albers	Terry or Julie Deines	Debra Holt	Judy Neuschafer	Gerald and Marsha Stohs
Sharron Allaman	Jana Donley	M.A. and P.L Holt	Betty Neville	Janice Strair
Ellen Alvarez	Virginia Donley	Betty Holtzen	New Basel Church	Steven and Barbara Stroda
Mary Amess	John Donnelly	Carolyn Hoover	Nex Tech Roral Telephone Service Co.	Ann Strunk
Robert Anderson	Shirley Dreiling	Fred and Joan Hopkins	Robert and Karen Nichols	Martha Strunk
Darel and Bobbi Anderson	Dale and Connie Dugan	Lavetra Horner	Gregg Noel	Samuel and Ronessa Stueve
Leon and Marti Anderson	Martina Dulohery	Jane Horst	Joan Noland	Gary Sweatland
Patti Anderson	Nicole and Shawn Dulohery	Janet Hottman	Naria Nuss	Joan Taylor
John and Judy Anguiano	Bob and Linda Ducan	Warren and Deborah Hull	Connie and bud Oak	Joyce Taylor
Patty Applegate	Bryan and Cassie Dunlap	Margaret Hutchinson	Trudy Ogatajames	Terry and Karlene Taylor
Patrick and Kelly Baalmann	Jan Dunlap	Twila Jackson	Ryan and Kimberly Pals	John and Esther Temaat
David and Elizabeth Bahner	Jaelyn Ecton	Lynn Jacobson	Laura Pape	The Brown Memorial Foundation
Pat Baier	Janet Edwards	Joanna and Terry Jacquinot	Michael Parsons	The Tri-County Telephone Association
Shelli Baker	Vicki and Edward Eggers	Janet Johnson	Vicki Paul	Dr. H.A. and Mary Beth Thompson
Marie Balfour	Kevin or Dayettra Einhaus	Evlin and Linda Jones	Joette Peyton	McKenzie and Anthony Tovar
Katy Barbieri	Jeffrey Elliott	Janet Jones	Charles or Jackie Phillips	Trinity Lutheran Church
John and April Barker	Emma Balsiger Foundation Inc	Karen and Keith Jones	Peter and Ruth Philpott	Mary Vanier
Jeff and Jame Bauman	Kristy Engle	D and G Kaster	Debbie Picking	Sharon Volkman
John Bauman	Terry and Jennify Enns	Kenneth and Melinda Keil	Pinnacle Bank	Vicki Wake
Mary Bauman	Shelia Erickson	Hugo and Donna Kickhaefer	Neil and Kylee Polok	Tresa and Kurt Waldhauer
James Beam	Ton Eskeldson	Wilma Jean Kiby	N. Kendall and Deanna Powell	Roger Walls
David and Debra Deasley	Stewart Etherington	Bill and Jackie Klapper	Fiona Price	Tina Warford
L and A Bechard	Donna and Jerry Evans	Dean and Anne Knauss	D. Provance	Washington Conference of SDA
Duane Beemer	Dennis Everett	Donny and Kary Knauss	Kate and Brant Rader	Webber Christian Women
Gregg and Joleen Beemer	Jeannie Evertt	Beverly Knopp	Jon Ramsey	Darda Wedel
Carolyn Beetch	Dan and Jo Leslie Evers	Jason Kohler	Larry and Tina Rankin	Kathleen Wedel
Donald or Vena Bender	Kristy and Doug Farley	J.D. and J.E. Kolzow	Carl and Darcee Redden	Teresa Weishaar
John Berger	Donnetta Felbush	Ketty Krenger	Vivian Redden	George Weiss
Bethany Community Church	Mary Feller	Kelly Krenger	Lynda and David Reed	Andrew and Amy Weldes
Sharla Biegert	Sally Finch	Sara and Loren Laird	Keli Reid	Carol Wenger
Donalyn Biehler	Janet Fink	Bette Lammerding	Terrie Reiff	Suzan Werner
Lisa Bledsoe	Ichard Fish	Landoll Company	Cindy Rempe	Barry and Meta West
Sherly Bloomfield	Steven Flynn	Steven Lang	Vivian Reschke	Steve and Janet West
Blue Beacon Inc	Jackie and Dale Foster	Jennifer and Mitch Langvardt	Zackery and Leslie Reynolds	West's Plaza County Mart Inc
Gene or Joyce Bollman	Janeen Fox	Seth Lauer	Mark Reidy	Denise White
M A Bond	Robert and Rhoda Frasier	Edward and Lori Lazear	Jeand and William Rivera	Carol Whitehair
Julie Bowell	Earl and Linda Frey	Yvonne Lee	Robert Pruett Insurance Agency	Daniel Whitehair
Barry and Donna Bowers	Dr. Todd Frieze	Linda Lefert	David Robinson	Janet Whitehair
Betty Bowers	Phyllis Garstecki	Rosemary Lefert	Brian and Candace Rock	Peggy Whitehair
Michael and Laura Bowers	Tony Geiger	Ethan and Karen Lehman	Kenneth and Julian Rock	Mary and Herbert Whitney
Carole Boyce	Cheril Geist	Stan and Betty Lewis	Lisa and David Rock	Christopher Williams
Arnold and Jean Boyd	Mr and aMrs Wayne H. Gfeller	Beth Longhofer	Lynn and Sharon Romberger	Kenneth Williams
Robert Brazil	Carolyn Gil	Don and Patricia Lorson	Sharon Rorabaugh	Jodie Williamson
Cheryl Breneman	Thelma Gillespie	Robt and Gina Lorson	Greg and Ann Rose	Rick Williamson
John or Becky Breener	Elgin and Sheree Glanzer	David and Connie Lowe	Randy and Julie Rowe	Scott Williamson
Jerry and Lois Brinker	Jean Gobber	Lynette and Thomas Lucas	Royer and Royer Chartered Attorney	Debra Wilson
Bathy Broadfoot Mudock	Mary Goever	Thomas and Jeannette Luedke	James and Dorothy Rucker	Jean Wilson
Gary Brown	Michael and Vicki Graft	Jeff and Mary Kate Luty	Jand and Kent Rudicel	Michael and Terry Wilson
Gertrude Brown	Rick Granzow	Bonnie Madsen	Jaquelyn Saffell	Rhonda Wilson
Janice Brunsell	Sue Gray	Ann Manning	Salina Regional Health Center	Kathy Winnie
Phyllis Budden	Brian and Leigh Ann Griffis	Bob and Karla Manspeaker	Fran Sanchez	Ardis Witt
Kevin and Susan Burchard	John and Kathy Gruber	Merle and Janelle Maring	George and Sharolyn Sanchez	Eldon Woellhof
Karen Burns	Clyde and D'Anne Gugler	Deb Marston	Nancy Sanchzw	Stefanie and Steven Woods
Bill Burwell	Nancy Gugler	Harold and Susan Martin	Roger and Kathleen Santo	Betty Woodson
Brenda Cain	William and Judi Hagger	Marcia Mathias	Gary and Sherry Sare	Kent and Diane Wyattt
Kenny Cain	Carla and John Hajek	John and Linda Mayes	Tim amd Tammy Sare	Ray Wyatt
Tom and Sandy Canfield	Elliot and Christine Hale	Toby and Lynn McCullough	Robert and Jean Schanefelt	
Dennis and Cathy Cashier	Gary Hall	Peggy McLaughlin Janke	David and Patricia Schimming	
Clenn and Sally Catlin	Rick Hall	Wayne and Susan McZegle	Matthew and Tina Schlotterback	
CCCHS Class of 1958	S and L Hambright	Dennis Medina	Stanley Schmidt	
Central Kansas Mental Health	Clark Hampton	Doughlas and Beck Medlock	Dalyn Schmitt	
Mike and Trudy Chaffee	Mildred Hanson	Peggy Meuli	Iris Schmitt	
Janet and Kenneth Chamberlin	Troy and Nancy Harding	Bruce and Theresa Meyer	Karen Schoebeck	
Jana Chase	Erin Hare	Robert and Janet Meyer	Chareles and Mary Schrader	
James and Salley Chestnut	Rosemary Marris	MHS Volunteer Corp	Steven Schwab	
Charles and Rebecca Claar	Jenell Hartman	Kevin Mickey	Dr. J Steven Schwarting	
Delcie and Todd Claeys	Walter and Janet Hartman	Andrea and Shawn Miller	Thomas and Joanna Schwartz	
Charles and Doran Clemence	Jerry Hatten	Sandra Miller	Max and Patty Searcey	
Sandy Clemence	James and Jane Hatton	Wayne and Diane Miller	Lawrence and Phyllis Serrault	
Brian and Stacey Combes	Daniel and Kimberly Heath	David Mills	Glenn Shank	
Community Foundation of DK CO	Lavera Heidel	Larry and Kathy Mills	Cindy and Mark Sheern	
Community Memorial Healthcare	Randall or Georgia Henry	Dennis and Kathryn Mills	Richard and Joan Sherbert	
Joni and Mike Cook	R and L Hern	Dennis and Kathryn Minneman	Steven and megan Sherrick	
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Coup	Adrian and Matt Hettenbach	David Mitchell	Joseph and Marie Shobe	
Carolyn and Kenneth Cox	Gary Hicks	Jean and Jennifer Mohler	Margaret and Ronald Shouse	
James and Linda Cox	David and Kathy Hildebrand	James Mohr	Michael and Cheryl Sibene	
Roger and Rosanne Cox	Gertrude Hinkle	Roshelle Moore	Katie Simmons	
Steve and Laura Cox	Jerry and Peggy Hitchcock	James Moorman	Duane and Marsha Simpson	
Jeff Crist	GD and Cindy Hite	Gregory and Barbara Morgan	Stephen and Teresa Sims	
Karen or Robert Cronkhite	Angie Hoerner	William and Joyce Morrison	Douglas and Debbie Smart	
Terry or Tara cupps	Cynthia Hoffman	Susan Mueller	Gerald and Fernetta Smith	
Rose Curran	Dwight and Leslie Hoffman	Mr. and Mrs. Phil Mulanax	Solomon Lions Club	
Willa Danner	Janice Hoffman	Nagely Farms	Debra and Larry Somers	
Glenna Dautel	Virginia Hoffman	Donna Nanninga	Denis and Janice Spillane	