



Compassionate Care

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Ceonda Rees New Palliative Care Specialist at Alton Memorial

ALTON, IL – Ceonda Rees knows that people with chronic, long-term diseases would rather not make repeated trips to the hospital or endure lengthy hospital stays. That's the main part of her mission as a palliative care specialist for Alton Memorial Hospital.

AMH has teamed with BJC Supportive Home Care to create a palliative care program at the hospital. Rees, who has been a home care nurse since 1994, is splitting her time between AMH and BJC Hospice of Alton, and officially began her new position April 22.

Ceonda Rees is a nurse specializing in palliative care at Alton Memorial Hospital, part of the hospital's new Supportive Care program.

"I'm at the hospital each morning for team meetings, then we go out to consult with doctors to see what patients might be eligible," Rees said. "Then we meet with patients and their families. The goal of the palliative care program is to follow them at home and do what's needed so they can stay home."

BJC Supportive Care is a specialized home health program that provides palliative care to patients with a chronic or life-threatening illness who are still receiving active

treatment A great emphasis is put on making the patient comfortable and improving quality of life. Supportive Care is physician directed and features a specially trained and dedicated team.

“Letting patients and families know they are not alone and they will have someone to contact 24 hours a day after returning home can be a great relief of anxiety,” Rees says. “Many time re-hospitalizations can be avoided if the patient had someone to make a visit, call the doctor for them or to reassure them when symptoms are arising.”

“If the patient needs to return to the hospital for treatment, the supportive care nurse is able to coordinate with the attending physician or to the ER to provide a history of what has progressed with the patient at home. Many times we are finding that patients may only need a specialized treatment to relieve their symptoms and may not need to be admitted to the hospital, but this requires coordination between home and the hospital. That is our role.”

Rees is originally from Sparta, Ill., and received her BSN at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 1991. She began her career at Saint Louis University Hospital before transitioning to Staunton Home Health Care and then to BJC Supportive Care and Hospice in 2007.

The palliative care team at AMH includes Rees, Cathy Welborn of BJC Hospice of Alton, Laura Bock of the Emergency Department, Cindy Igo of the Intensive Care Unit, Amy Toenyes of the Medical Care Unit/Digestive Health Center, Chaplain Bruce Baumberger, parish nurse Judy Roth and hospitalist Dr. Stanley Sidwell.

Rees is happy to speak with anyone about the benefits of palliative care. To reach her, call BJC Hospice of Alton at 618-463-7100.