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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospice of the Valley to Host Free Community Open House to Start Conversation About End-of-Life Wishes

National Healthcare Decisions Day attendees to learn about advance healthcare directives

SAN JOSE, Calif., April 7, 2015 – Join Hospice of the Valley at a free, all-day Open House celebrating National Healthcare Decisions Day on Thursday, April 16, in which community attendees can get peace of mind by completing an advance healthcare directive on-site, get questions answered by end-of-life and palliative care professionals, and learn how to start the conversation about end-of-life wishes.

The Open House, which is free and open to the public, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 16 at Hospice of the Valley, 4850 Union Ave., San Jose.

An advance healthcare directive is a legal document in which people specify what actions should be taken for their health if they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves because of illness or incapacity. Statistics show that only about 25 percent of Americans have completed an advance directive.

“Hospice of the Valley is issuing a personal invitation to all Silicon Valley residents to complete an advance directive,” said Sally Adelus, president and CEO of Hospice of the Valley. “For those who have gone through a health crisis or a serious illness of a loved one, you know from experience how much easier it is when wishes are spelled out.

“But making future healthcare decisions includes much more than deciding what care you would or would not want; it starts with expressing preferences, clarifying values, identifying care preferences and selecting an ‘agent’ to express healthcare decisions if you are unable to speak for yourself,” Adelus said.

“Having an advance directive ready improves the ability of healthcare facilities and providers to offer informed and thoughtful guidance to adhere to patients’ wishes.”

The Hospice of the Valley Open House will include:

- **10 - 11:30 a.m. Workshop: “The Do’s and Don’ts of Advance Healthcare Directives”:** Karen Storey, advance care planning facilitator. Receive a free copy of an advance directive form and learn the do’s and don’ts of completing it in this hands-on workshop.
- **11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. One-on-One Assistance.** Have you attended an Advance Care workshop, but haven’t yet finished your forms? Get your questions answered one-on-one and take advantage of an on-site notary to finalize your forms. Get personalized assistance with a “Go Wish” cards exercise to learn how to start end-of-life conversations with loved ones. A complimentary lunch will be served.
- **2 - 3:30 p.m. Workshop: “Palliative Care 101: What You Need to Know”;** Brad Leary, LCSW, CT, vice president of counseling services, Hospice of the Valley; and Megan McKenna, RN, MSN, FNP-C. Palliative care is expert medical care dedicated to relieving the pain, distress and other symptoms that can accompany serious illness. Learn about the benefits of the Palliative Care Center Silicon Valley, including symptom management, support services and improving quality of life.
- **3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Small-Group Exercise: Starting End-of Life Conversations;** Join Hospice of the Valley social workers and volunteers in this small-group exercise to learn how to start end-of-life conversations with your loved ones with the “Go Wish” cards.

Although the event is free, registration is required. Register online for the event by April 14 at www.hospicevalley.org/healthcare.

About Hospice of the Valley

Celebrating nearly 35 years of service to our community, Hospice of the Valley is a nonprofit organization that exists to support patients and their families during one of life’s most challenging – yet most meaningful – times. Hospice of the Valley provides serious illness and end-of-life care programs and services, including palliative and hospice care, grief counseling for adults, children and families, and emotional support, education and practical assistance. Established in July 2013, the Palliative Care Center Silicon Valley, the first independent, community-based, licensed outpatient center of its kind in California for seriously ill patients and their families, is a division of Hospice of the Valley. Hospice of the Valley also provides a community resource website for patients and families at seriousillness.org/santaclaracounty. Hospice of the Valley honors all cultures, beliefs, values and traditions and is committed to serving its diverse community and providing equitable access to care for all regardless of financial ability. For more information, call 1.408.559.5600 or visit hospicevalley.org.

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