

Lawrence Home Nursing Team Newsletter, 2010.

Twice this year I have had to break the devastating news to patients that they had a terminal diagnosis. The husbands of both patients had been nursed by the Lawrence Home Nursing Team. The reaction of each was exactly the same; they looked at me with real confidence and said "I know the Lawrence Home Nursing Team will be there for me and give me the very best care!" It is a real tribute to the whole team that we have earned this respect and trust from our patients over the past decade.

I was very heartened by a letter in "Cotswold Life" which was drawn to my attention. It was written by Darren Davis, the son of a patient whom we had nursed. He wrote extremely movingly about the holistic care he and the family had received from us. In addition he did a sponsored bike ride on our behalf and he has written an article in the "Banbury Guardian". It is such an encouragement to find that users of our service are so pleased that they feel inspired to support and promote us in such ways.

This year there has been a real push countywide to improve end of life care. I was delighted that Val Stangoe from the PCT was able to attend our AGM in May as our guest speaker on the subject of the "Oxfordshire End of Life Plan" which aims to implement national aspirations. It is well recognised that more patients die in hospital than is necessary, and often this is because arrangements cannot be made quickly enough, or no service is in place, to enable patients to receive the care they need at home. It is also appropriate and better if terminal care can be carried out by specialist teams away from acute hospitals as the needs of the dying patient are usually very different from that of general hospital care. It is exactly this type of service that the Lawrence Home Nursing Team provides in and around Chipping Norton.

We are well ahead of even much larger towns. Within Oxfordshire our team is the longest established and most developed service. Commissioners in Banbury are looking to Jenny Nolan, our Nursing Coordinator, and myself to give support in setting up a similar service in Banbury to enable terminally ill patients who are discharged from hospital to return home or to a more suitable community setting. Innovative professionals in Witney are looking to set up a charitable organisation very similar to the Lawrence Home Nursing Team. We are very keen to give our full support to these schemes.

The Lawrence Home Nursing Team is seen as the Gold Standard for community centred terminal care. In recognition of this and with the implementation of the "End of Life Plan" the PCT has, for the first time, given us funding to the tune of £10,000. We are grateful for this, but are very clear that we remain an entirely independent organisation with the ability to use our funds entirely at our own discretion and that this PCT funding does not mean we are under direct NHS control. As some of our income has to be used on administration, insurance and other organisational areas other than direct patient care the trustees have decided to use this PCT funding to cover such non clinical areas so that the maximum amount of funds raised by donors can go directly into the nursing service.

Nationally the profile of community based terminal care has been considerably raised in recent years and the ability of patients to die at home, if they wish,

is moving closer to a nationwide reality and expectation. The Lawrence Home Nursing Team is seen as a pioneering service and I am very committed to sharing and encouraging others to aspire to achieve what we have done. The key to our success remains the commitment of all our team in their different roles. From the nursing team, to our trustees, fundraisers and administrative specialists. With the unstinting support of our community we are able to work together to achieve a service that is now well recognised as a national aspiration.

I would, on behalf of the entire Lawrence Home Nursing Team, like to congratulate our Patron, David Cameron, on his appointment as Prime Minister. David agreed to succeed Ronnie Barker as our Patron without any hesitation and has been exceptionally supportive. He has donated part of the proceeds of his biography to us and been involved in fundraising and increasing our profile for which we are extremely grateful.

I wish you a merry Christmas and thank you so much for your continued support.

Dr Jonathan Moore