

April 20, 2009

The Star Democrat
Letters to the Editor
P.O. Box 600
Easton, MD 21601

Dear Editor,

The news is full of information about health care reform. President Obama's call for an overhaul of our nation's health care system had triggered a national debate on what works and what doesn't, including how Medicare dollars are spent. It seems like an appropriate time to highlight a part of our health care sector that works, specifically hospice.

Hospice is part of the solution for patients and families, and as a model of cost-efficient and high quality health care. These programs provide invaluable services and care by enhancing the quality of life for the terminally ill, and by keeping them in the place that they consider home.

In addition, hospice is actually a cost saver for Medicare. A 2007 independent Duke University study found that it reduced Medicare cost by \$2,300 per patient, amounting to \$2 billion in savings a year.

Hospice has also been found to be the kind of high quality care that patients and families want, with more than 98% of served families willing to recommend hospice to others. Last year, more than 1.4 million patients and their family caregivers chose the compassionate end-of-life care found through hospice.

This health care debate will be with us for some time, so it's important to know what works. Hospice is part of the solution.

Sincerely,

Julie L. Crocker MSN, RN
Executive Director
Talbot Hospice Foundation