



## **HOSPICE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Hospice Southeastern Connecticut's (HSECT) mission is to provide quality care for people with life-limiting illnesses and support for their loved ones before and after death. Volunteers are essential members of the HSECT Interdisciplinary Group. These trained volunteers advance our mission by providing a variety of services to our patients, their families, and our staff.

### Patient Care Volunteers

HSECT Patient Care Volunteers offer emotional support, companionship, respite, and friendly visits to patients in their homes, in the hospital, or nursing facilities. They spend time with patients sharing life interests, reading, or listening to music. Patients and their families appreciate the quiet caring attention and support of these volunteers. Patient Care Volunteers also provide support to families by running errands, light medical equipment delivery, etc.

### Complementary Therapists

HSECT is fortunate to have a special group of therapists whose therapeutic skills help relieve patients' pain and stress. Our Complementary Therapists are practitioners of reiki, reflexology, healing touch and therapeutic massage. Their expertise brings relaxation, reduces tension and promotes a sense of well-being. Our pet therapists - certified therapy dogs and their trainers - offer patients unconditional affection and a warm and comforting presence at the patients' bedsides.

### Bereavement Volunteers

Once a patient dies, HSECT continues its involvement with the family by providing bereavement services. Bereavement volunteers deliver roses of remembrance to families, assist with bereavement phone calls, and provide administrative support to the Bereavement office.

### Interpreter Volunteers

During this most vulnerable time for patients and families, it can be difficult for a family member to play the dual role of child/spouse/parent and interpreter. Interpreter volunteers provide relief for families in these situations. They assist our staff in communicating effectively with patients and their families in their native language. Interpreter volunteers are also important to our organization as community partners: educating local cultural communities about the ways in which our agency can support families and patients during their end-of-life journey and educating our staff on various culturally unique perspectives and needs during end-of-life care.

### Office and Community Volunteers

HSECT volunteers also support the work of HSECT by providing important clerical and administrative assistance in the office, staffing information tables, talking with the public, and distributing brochures at community events. Other volunteers pick up and deliver prescriptions or light medical equipment and run errands for families. Volunteers also participate in our Speakers' Bureau, addressing civic and social groups about the history, mission, and services of our agency.

### Fundraising Volunteers

As a non-profit agency HSECT relies heavily on donations, grants, and fundraising to support services that are not covered by insurance but are nonetheless essential to patient care. Volunteers provide critical assistance in organizing and staffing special events and ongoing fundraising activities. The success of our HSECT fundraising events relies on the expertise, enthusiasm, and hard work of our fundraising volunteers.

Volunteers are essential to the work of HSECT. Their energy, skills, and dedication complement that of our staff and enable us to provide the best hospice care to our friends and neighbors in southeastern Connecticut. We welcome you to become a part of our circle of care. For more information, please contact Lauren Watson, Volunteer Program Administrator, at 860-848-5699 or [vol@hospicesect.org](mailto:vol@hospicesect.org).

## **HOSPICE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS\***

**Age & Time Commitment:** All prospective volunteers must be at least 18 years old. Patient Care Volunteers must commit to providing a minimum of two hours of service per week.

**Interview:** All prospective volunteers will have an initial interview with the Volunteer Program Administrator to determine whether the prospective volunteer's skills fit the needs of our volunteer program.

**Application and Paperwork:** Hospice Southeastern Connecticut (HSECT) volunteers are considered employees. They must complete a volunteer application and all other necessary paperwork.

**Training:** All prospective volunteers must participate in our free training program. Patient Care Volunteers and Complementary Therapists must complete the entire training series that covers the physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual aspects of end of life care. Complementary Therapists need to attend one additional (one hour) training session specifically tailored to their role. Bereavement Volunteers participate in the first training session and one additional session also specifically tailored to their role. Pet Therapists only need to complete the first training session. Office and Event Volunteers who do not interact with patients and their families only need to complete the first session of the training series.

**Transportation and Insurance:** All prospective volunteers must have reliable transportation to get to and from their assignments. They must also have valid insurance coverage for their vehicle.

**Background and Motor Vehicle Check:** All prospective volunteers must permit a criminal background check and motor vehicle check. This protects our patients, their families, the volunteers, and our staff.

**Tuberculosis Test:** All prospective volunteers who will be having patient contact must have a one-time, free, 2 step tuberculosis testing screen done by Hospice SECT. Volunteers must be clear of tuberculosis to be a Hospice volunteer.

**Hepatitis B Vaccination or Titer (optional):** All prospective volunteers have the option to receive a free Hepatitis B vaccination series and/or titer.

**Physician's Certificate:** All prospective volunteers must have a physician fill out a HSECT Physician's Certificate certifying that they are fit to perform the duties of a volunteer at Hospice Southeastern Connecticut and are free from infectious diseases.

**Reference Letters:** All prospective volunteers must have HSECT reference form completed and returned by two references, one of which should be a professional reference. Complementary Therapists must have two professional references.

### **Complementary Therapists & Pet Therapists**

**Professional License or Certificate:** Complementary Therapists must provide a valid copy of their professional license or certificate and submit renewals as they are issued. No Complementary Therapist will be able to provide service to our patients without a current license on file. All Pet Therapists must provide a copy of training certification, proof of town registration, and vaccination documentation.

**Liability Insurance Coverage:** Complementary Therapists and Pet Therapists must provide proof of liability insurance coverage. The minimum liability coverage for Complementary Therapists is \$1M single limit or \$1M/\$3M combined limit. The minimum liability coverage for Pet Therapists is \$1M single limit or \$1M/\$2M combined limit.

**NOTE:** Persons within one year of an acute personal loss, or participants in current bereavement support groups, will not normally serve as a Patient Care volunteer or in a Public Relations volunteer role. They may serve as a general volunteer, with the approval of the Executive Director and Volunteer Program Administrator.