Dear Hospicare friends and family:

As our understanding of COVID-19 evolves, we want to inform you of actions that Hospicare is taking, effective immediately.

**Patient Care**

Our top priority is the health and safety of our staff, patients, families, volunteers, and visitors.

The front door is now the single point of entry and exit for both Hospicare locations: East King Road in Ithaca and Kennedy Parkway in Cortland. (In the event of an emergency, all doors are available to exit the premises.) All staff, volunteers, and visitors will be screened upon entry, and an infection control station is available with hand-sanitizer, tissues and other supplies. Anyone exhibiting respiratory symptoms or fever will not be permitted to enter the building.

Visits to patient private homes continue as normal, and Hospicare is committed to providing exceptional care to patients, no matter where they live. This may require us to be creative as we learn of the practices and procedures that our community partners are implementing. Each facility will likely have their own protocols, ranging from taking temperatures at the door to limiting who can enter. Hospicare will cooperate with all facility procedures and prioritize the safety and comfort of our patients and their loved ones.

We have purchased extra food and extra medical supplies to ensure that we have everything we need for the coming weeks. Staff remain in communication with the Office of Emergency Management to secure supplies as needed. Our cleaning service has been instructed to pay special attention to wiping down door handles, countertops and bathrooms.

**Groups**

Hospicare has suspended all events and support groups until April 15, at which time we will evaluate the situation and communicate any further suspensions. This includes all Hospicare groups as well as those hosted by external organizations or individuals who utilize our space.

Please understand that we did not make this decision lightly. Support groups are critical for many in our community who are suffering a loss. Hospicare has a list of online grief resources that may be of assistance.

**Staff**

Essential personnel will be fitted for N95 masks in the event that wearing this mask for patient care is required by the CDC’s infection control guidelines.

In the event that a staff member is exposed to anyone who is exhibiting symptoms of, is under quarantine for, or has tested positive for COVID-19, that individual will immediately self-quarantine, get evaluated by a medical professional, and report the exposure to a member of Hospicare’s leadership. Staff have been instructed not to go anywhere until they received clearance or further instruction.

**Important Reminders**

As with any cold or flu, if you have respiratory symptoms, stay home and limit your contact with others. COVID-19 can be transmitted easily, and it’s the most vulnerable members of our community who will be impacted the most by its spread.
When washing hands, use soap and water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds, making sure to touch all areas of the hands and between your fingers.

Take care of not just your physical health, but also your emotional well-being. A good resource for information is the CDC’s page about mental health and coping during COVID-19.

By taking measures to control the spread of disease, you play a critical role in helping to protect our community.

Up-to-date information is also available at www.coronavirus.gov

Thank you for being a part of this special community, and we will continue to provide updates as needed. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@hospicare.org.

Kim De Rosa
Executive Director