



Partners *on the* Journey

SUMMER 2018

News about caring
for residents
with serious or
life-limiting illness

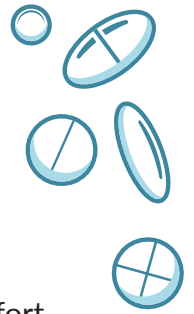
Adapting to the Realities of the Mega-Rule

For skilled nursing facilities, the new Mega-Rule changes related to psychotropic medications and those needed to manage anxiety, sleep or mood are having a big impact on hospice patients. We understand the frustration of finding out that a PRN medication order is expiring—just as it is suddenly needed. Please know that Agrace is concerned about the Mega-Rule's effects, and we will work with you to keep our mutual patients comfortable as new symptoms arise.

Tell us your preferences: Our care teams are communicating with each skilled nursing location we serve to ensure we know your process and your preferences. We record those details in Agrace's internal electronic preference form, where our staff can easily see what's needed at your site. Please tell us what questions you have and what we can do to support you.

As we work with you to meet the new regulations, **we are committed to providing appropriate symptom management for patients on our service.** In addition to medications, we may be able to arrange a period of Continuous Care to help improve comfort for patients who meet the criteria set forth by Medicare. PalliaHealth by Agrace consultations are also available for your residents who are not hospice-eligible, but are struggling with unmanaged symptoms.

You can find details of these services, as well as our past newsletters, hospice eligibility criteria by diagnosis and much more at agrace.org/resources. Please contact your Agrace RN or liaison to let us know how we can help.



When to Call Agrace



Hospice care is for people who have a serious illness, are expected to live six months or less and are no longer receiving curative treatment. A person might be in that six-month window if their health decline includes several of these signs:

- Noticeable weight loss
- Shortness of breath
- Several ER visits or hospitalizations
- Frequent falls
- Difficulty swallowing or less appetite
- Weakness, lack of energy, sleeping more
- Uncontrolled pain
- Multiple skin sores that do not heal
- Needing help with most activities of daily living
- Desire to focus on comfort, not cure

Learn the signs of hospice eligibility for common serious illnesses on Agrace's webpage for health care professionals, agrace.org/resources. Please contact your Agrace liaison or call our Enrollment Team at **(800) 930-2770** with questions about hospice readiness or to arrange a hospice assessment for a resident. We can enroll patients any time of day, 365 days a year, including holidays.

Dr. MJ Shah Named VP of Medical Services

Dr. MJ Shah has been named vice president of medical services for Agrace. Fellowship-trained in geriatrics and palliative medicine, Dr. Shah has 12 years' experience in hospice and palliative care. She joined Agrace in 2015 as a hospice & palliative physician, having held positions in and near Rochester, N.Y., before moving to Madison.



You and your residents who are served by Agrace have access to the specialized knowledge of our large, dedicated team of palliative and hospice doctors and nurse practitioners. Read about them at agrace.org/leadership and palliahealth.org.

Learn about End-of-life Care, Grief and More

You can help your staff feel more confident about caring for your residents when you host clinical in-service trainings from Agrace. We offer one 30-minute and seven 60-minute programs. To see course descriptions, visit agrace.org/resources, then choose "Clinical Inservices." Please call your Agrace liaison to schedule the programs that interest you.

1. Declining with Dementia
2. Grief 101: Tips for Self-care and Supporting Others through Loss
3. Hospice & Palliative Care 101: When Is It Time to Make a Referral?
4. Ethics in End-of-Life Care
5. Pain Management for the Hospice Patient
6. What to Expect When Death Is Approaching
7. Skin Care for the Hospice Patient (30 minutes)
8. Advance Care Planning

Online Referrals Take < 5 Minutes


Using Agrace's online referral form can streamline the communication needed to refer a resident for hospice. Jessica Deiss, social worker with Tabor Oaks Assisted Living & Covenant Oaks Memory Care, says, "I use the online referral link for professionals for all my Agrace referrals now. It takes me less than five minutes to complete, and I can add in special details as I need to. The immediate email response and follow up is consistent, and I can count on the referral having been received for certain vs. having to wait for a fax response."



Jessica Deiss

Here's how to save a link to your mobile phone or tablet's home screen so you can open the form with one tap.

Apple iPhones:

1. Visit agrace.org/refer.
2. Click "I am Clinic or LTC Staff referring a patient/resident".
3. Tap the share icon  and choose "Add to Home Screen".
4. Tap the resulting icon to open the referral form.



Android phone or tablet:

Find directions for this process on your device by searching online for "Add a website to Android home screen."

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For more information about any topic in this newsletter, please contact your Agrace outreach liaison or email karri.kelliher@agrace.org

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Referrals/Admissions: (800) 930-2770