

Epic Weather Prompts Agrace to Help with Evacuation Planning

When the skies opened over southern Wisconsin in late summer with epic rains and tornadoes, Agrace's Denise Budurov didn't panic. She'd been through this before. She knew what to do.

As the clinical manager for Agrace's Indigo hospice care team based in Baraboo, Wis., Denise was prepared for the possibility that our patients might need to be evacuated from private homes or long-term care facilities to safer locations. Ten years earlier, she had managed a similar crisis, in the Wisconsin Dells area. She remembers, "In 2008 we had to blanket-lift people at midnight onto [amphibious] Dells Ducks!" She was determined to be better prepared in the future.

After the 2008 flood, Denise completed a detailed community training about the area's rivers and how flooding would develop in periods of heavy rain. She was unconvinced she'd need the "once-in-100-years" information until August, when she got a call that the Hillsboro dam had breached.

"I remembered that you just kept working down the river, one town a day, to stay ahead of the water. We needed a plan to get our patients evacuated ahead of time, even though it was a bright, sunny day," she explains. "I already knew which facilities were at flooding risk, where patients might have to be taken out."

While planning a possible move for Agrace's patients at one assisted living home, Denise was able to collaborate with its director on an evacuation plan for their other residents, as well.



Under Denise's leadership, the Indigo Team safely cared for more than 100 hospice patients, spread out over parts of four largely rural counties northwest of Madison. They worked around flooded valleys where roads had crumbled



and bridges washed away. The team communicated actively to ensure all patients' needs were met each day. "We'd call Denise and she'd send detour directions," says Jaci Shauger, an Agrace RN case manager. "She was our Google, day and night."

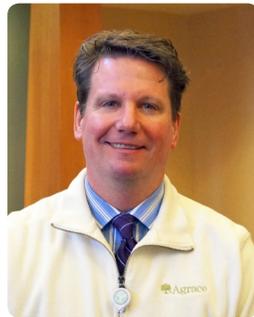
Denise credits access to 511 information on road conditions for her team's ability to reach all our hospice patients, including some at long-term care facilities threatened by flooding. But Jaci gives Denise the credit for staying cool in crisis: "She didn't just guide the Agrace team, she was able to help our partner facilities make an emergency plan for their residents. The proactive part that Denise did was really important."

Grief Support from Agrace Offers Families, Your Staff Help Coping

Facing the end of life can be an emotional, stressful experience for your residents and their families. Your staff may feel stress too, if they are not comfortable offering grief support. **But when residents are enrolled in hospice, Agrace can help them, their family and your staff cope with the complex emotions that arise when death is near.**

For residents on hospice: The spiritual & grief counselor from your Agrace care team will meet 1:1 with our patients or their family. These meaningful conversations may address new worries and the old hurts people long to settle when time is short.

“We listen to help people deal with feelings like sadness, regret, fear, loss, forgiveness, despair and anger,” says Kurt Patrick, Agrace’s spiritual & grief services manager. “We meet residents ‘where they are’ and help explore what is important to them as a supportive, compassionate presence.”



Kurt Patrick

For families: Agrace keeps in touch with our patients’ families for 12 months following the death, with mailings, phone visits and invitations to memorial events. We host support groups at the Agrace Grief Support Center in Fitchburg, Wis., and in other cities across our service area. These groups are open to anyone who is grieving—including those who haven’t used hospice.

For your staff: Agrace can teach your staff about healthy grieving. We offer “**Grief 101: Tips for Self-care and Supporting Others through Loss,**” an educational in-service. Ask your liaison if you would like to schedule this 60-minute learning opportunity.

If you believe your resident or their family needs emotional or spiritual support from Agrace, please tell our staff. **We value your insight.**

Now Serving More of Southwestern Wisconsin

Agrace is growing again, adding Lafayette, eastern Grant and western Iowa counties in southwestern Wisconsin to our service area. In January, we will open an office in Platteville. Adding these counties to our service area brings area residents greater access to high-quality end-of-life and palliative care.

Agrace Service Area 2019



To refer a resident for hospice anywhere in our service area, please call our Patient Referral line, **(800) 930-2770.**

You Can Compare Hospice Quality Data Online

Like “Nursing Home Compare,” **Hospice Compare** now makes hospice quality data available to the public at [medicare.gov/hospicecompare](https://www.medicare.gov/hospicecompare). This new site shows family experience ratings from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey and reports how thoroughly the hospice assesses patients as they are enrolling. While only a small snapshot of the care a hospice provides, this data allows hospices benchmark their quality data.

Please note that our Rockford office quality numbers aren’t available yet, as the number of patient stays was too small during the reporting period. Data for Illinois will be available soon.

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