In March, I began the privilege of leading the Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Partnership. I am enjoying getting to know our members and supporters and learning what is most wanted from a state hospice association.

I have quickly learned that issues related to reimbursement and regulations are at the top of the priority list. Members’ input is at the core of any steps we will take to address these important issues. My intention is to be responsive and respectful of your requests and needs.

I am highly impressed with all that was accomplished by the Association’s board of directors, committees and staff in 2009. With your support, I look forward to building on the foundation that has been laid before me.

As a former nursing home administrator, I witnessed the value of hospice for residents, families and nursing home staff. I will forever be an advocate for hospice and look forward to being a part of watching it grow in Nebraska.

Sincerely,
Heath G. Boddy
Executive Director

RAISING AWARENESS

The Association holds relationships with local, state and national media. In 2009, these relationships reached a variety of audiences and resulted in placements in such outlets as the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s NewsLine, American Pain Foundation’s Pain Monitor, Nebraska Medical Association’s NMA News, State Board of Nursing’s Nursing News, Living Well Magazine by southeast Nebraska’s Aging Partners, Lincoln Journal Star, Omaha World-Herald, Grand Island Independent, KPTM Fox 42, KLKN-TV and KOLN/KGIN-TV, KFOR 1240AM, and countless hometown newspapers and radio stations across the state.

PRIORITY: QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Offering top-notch education to those who work with chronically and terminally ill Nebraskans is the foundation of the Association’s work. Last year, more than 600 hospice, nursing home, hospital and other professionals received education from the Association.

Sessions included Are You Survey-Ready? and Tools for Helping Children and Adults Through Grief. In addition, staff traveled the state to give an overview of hospice regulatory changes and hold member listening sessions.

In partnership with the VA and State Veterans’ Homes, education was held on Homeless Veterans and the End of Life, as well as Interdisciplinary Pain and Non-Pain Symptom Management.

Members took advantage of a course preparing them to take a national hospice certification exam. Lastly, regular teleconferences for hospice social workers, chaplains and volunteer coordinators provided an opportunity to share ideas with counterparts statewide.
For nine years, professionals who work with individuals at the end of life come to Lincoln from across the region to attend the Association’s “Living a Good Life... at the End of Life” Conference. The conference has become a tradition for physicians, nurses, social workers, advocates, administrators, and others working in the end-of-life field.

The conference included such sessions as PTSD: The Unrecognized Symptom, Communication Strategies for Shared Caregiving, Hospice Volunteers: Filling a Void for the Dying Patient, and Better Breathing with Palliative Care: Managing Pulmonary Symptoms.

A PARTNERSHIP OF HEALTH AGENCIES

The Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Partnership is a member of Community Health Charities of Nebraska (CHC), a federation that raises funds for Nebraska’s health charities through workplace giving. Through speaking engagements, display booths, co-branding, and representation on CHC’s three board of directors, the Association has strengthened its relationship with CHC and participating businesses. Funds directed to the Association from these efforts have increased 51 percent since 2007.

This partnership not only raises needed funds that help support the work of the Association, but also allows for Nebraska’s workforce to become educated on hospice.

A PARTNERSHIP FOR VETERANS

A partnership between the Association, the VA, and State Veterans’ Homes, the Nebraska Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP) continued its work to increase hospice use by veterans. Activities included regular educational events for professionals working with veterans at the end of life. The HVP also facilitated the distribution of educational DVDs titled Wounded Warrior to the staff of 71 Nebraska hospices, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. And, hospice information fairs were held at seven VA facilities and State Veterans’ Homes.

The Association’s Website, nehospice.org, continues to be a focal point of all marketing and serves as the primary source for members of the public and medical professionals looking for end-of-life information. Last year, the site averaged 53 visitors per day, many of whom were searching for a hospice in their area, looking for advance directive information, or seeking details on professional education events.
Last year, the Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Partnership began the development of WorkPath, which originated in 2006 as a federally-funded, systems-change grant project called Ticket to Work Palliative Care.

The Association has administered Ticket to Work Palliative Care since 2006 to pilot the concept of returning Nebraskans in pain to the workforce through the use of palliative care. The grant requires that the concept become a self-sustaining operation by the end of 2010, and therefore WorkPath was developed.

WorkPath will partner with worker’s compensation companies, self-insured organizations, disability insurance companies, and others to identify individuals who will benefit from participation.

A ROLE IN END-OF-LIFE RESEARCH

Last year, the Association played a role in research that advanced the mission of hospice. The August issue of *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* included an article titled “Nebraska Veterans’ Preferences for End-of-Life Care.” The article was based on the Nebraska End-of-Life Survey, a research project completed by the Association in 2003 and 2006.

Also in 2009, the Association began surveying Nebraska hospices to collect data on length of stay and location of service. The gathering of this data on a statewide basis allows the Association to have more current data for use with its advocacy, regulatory and public relations work.
In 2009, the Association created a presence on social networking sites, allowing the hospice message to reach those with a personal or professional interest in our work.

NHPCP Leadership, 2009-2010

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Thank You
The Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Partnership thanks the following organizations and individuals for their generous support given from April 1, 2009, through March 31, 2010.

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Alegent Health Hospice, Omaha
Community Health, McCook
HPC for Foundation for Hospice Care/AseraCare Hospice Nebraska
Methodist Home Health & Hospice, Omaha
Prairie Haven Hospice, Scottsbluff
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Annette Kasselman
Annette Krueger
Nina Martin
Mary Oliver
Trudy Meyer
Linda Robinson Rutz

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AseraCare Hospice - Lincoln
AseraCare Hospice - Norfolk
AseraCare Hospice - Omaha
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MCH & HS Hospice - Oakland
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Hillcrest Nursing Home, McCook

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