

## HOSPICE HAPPENINGS JULY 2015

### I AM DYING?

Although we are all aware of the fact that the guaranteed end to life is death, there is never a lot of thought given to that fact until we are actually told "you have a terminal illness". Then, hopefully, the conversations begin around expectations of the life remaining and how to plan for the process of dying.

Hospice palliative care embraces all aspects of who we are as individuals and encourages physical symptom management. Possibly even more important is the support through the maze of emotions and fears that we may face at end of life.

The choice of hospice means that family can ease out of the role of being the main caregiver and back into the role of family. Hospice provides a setting which supports family interaction and care. It is exactly like staying at home, but with medical support 24 hours a day.

The criteria for admittance into the Olds & District Hospice Society suites include the acceptance of a terminal diagnosis. There is an understanding that you are dying. Now the emphasis is on comfort, safety and support. There will be no more diagnostics or curative treatments. Professional medical care will be focused on comfort and the management of changing palliative symptoms. This is difficult, but acknowledging our own end of life is very real.

One of the goals of O&DHS is to assist with the navigation of the end of life care journey. It does not have to be overwhelming. Admittance to the hospice suites require assessments by Home Care and a care plan developed by the medical staff of Sunrise Encore to address all medical and physical needs. This will be re-evaluated regularly. If required, your physician will visit you at Sunrise Encore, and if medications or other supplies are needed that are not automatically covered under Alberta Health Care then O&DHS, the Palliative Care Resource Nurse and other counselors can help you through the options and paperwork of additional assistance through palliative assistance programs.

Dying is uncharted waters for most of us, but you do not have to be out there alone. For more information, please call the Olds & District Hospice Society at 403-586-9992