

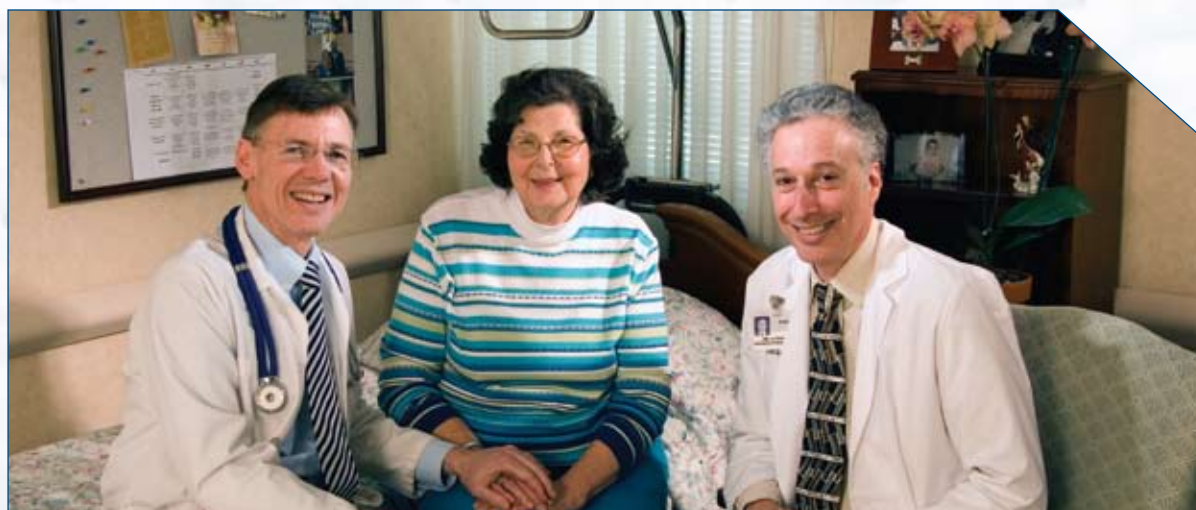


# The Friendship Quilt

A newsletter highlighting news and trends affecting senior living in our community.

## Meet the Docs

Friendship's medical directors set the standard for quality care



Drs. Nottingham (left) and Stavola (right, with Anna Driver) have made the rounds at Friendship for more than 25 years.

Residents at Friendship Retirement Community's Health and Rehab Center enjoy high-quality medical care.

But that's no surprise given the experience of medical director Dr. Tony Stavola and assistant medical director Dr. Kipper Nottingham.

Together, they and Dr. Soheir Boshra (see page 2) form a triumvirate of physicians with backgrounds in geriatric medicine who establish, monitor and evaluate the standards of care for Friendship patients.

Drs. Stavola and Nottingham, Carilion physicians with North Roanoke Family Practice, have been affiliated with Friendship for more than 25 years. They put their specialty to work every week, visiting and treating patients, credentialing visiting physicians, overseeing medical care, determining medical policies and direction, and keeping tabs on medical trends that can benefit Friendship patients.

"We wear a couple of different hats," Dr. Nottingham says. "We're very much part of the fabric here."

In addition to patient visits, both doctors support patients' physicians, not all of whom are able to visit Friendship regularly. If patients don't have a personal physician, it's their job to help find one and coordinate medical care.

"We look at all care services that are required for a patient's treatment," Dr. Stavola says. "For instance, many of our patients are on multiple

medications. We make sure the medications are appropriate and monitored for any drug interactions."

A physician's assistant also is regularly available at Friendship. "That's been a real benefit for our patients because she can be on-site every day, which cuts down on the amount of telephone medicine," Dr. Stavola says.

"The level of support services available at Friendship are a cut above what I've seen in other facilities," he adds. "Having a physician's assistant here on a daily basis is a major plus. That really helps to set the care level higher because there is someone who can respond promptly to acute situations. Those factors make a difference."

As medical directors, the duo recommends the latest trends and technology in medical care to help administrators decide to change a process or invest in new medical equipment.

"There's been a real commitment on the administration's part to develop some different approaches to the way care is delivered," Dr. Stavola explains. "For instance, when a patient transfers to Friendship from a hospital, medical papers get shuffled from one place to another. We have developed initiatives and the use of electronic records, so that we are notified before a patient leaves the hospital to come here. That way we can review their condition and medications

*(continued on page 4)*

## Welcome



Welcome to the latest issue of The Friendship Quilt.

This newsletter will keep you informed about trends in senior living through stories told by the people at Friendship Retirement Community.

In this issue you'll learn about palliative care, a relatively new approach that focuses on managing chronic medical needs, including making the end of life as comfortable as possible. It's something we've embraced at Friendship with a dedicated Palliative Care Unit.

You'll also read about the various options for independent living available to seniors today.

With more than 40 years of trusted service, Friendship is home to almost 1,000 residents on two campuses, making it one of the largest retirement communities in Virginia. A not-for-profit organization, Friendship offers nursing care, assisted living, independent living, personal care service and a broad range of medical services, including rehabilitation and orthopedic care.

And as you'll read in this issue of The Friendship Quilt, Friendship provides an innovative approach to today's senior care.

Stan Huffman  
President and CEO  
Friendship Retirement Community

Visit us at [www.friendshipretirementcommunity.com](http://www.friendshipretirementcommunity.com)

## Contents

- ▶ Meet The Docs
- ▶ Palliative Care
- ▶ Independent Living
- ▶ Assisted Living

# Palliative Care

## A unique approach to the end of life

Families seeking options for their elderly loved ones are increasingly drawn to palliative care as a way to make the final days, weeks or even months of life as comfortable as possible.

Palliative care focuses on enhancing quality of life by reducing pain and managing other physical symptoms so the patient and family can focus on precious time together. It's a national trend that's been embraced by Friendship Retirement Community through the area's only specially dedicated palliative care unit.

The 23-bed unit features warm and compassionate surroundings, expert medical care and round-the-clock assistance to make the final stage of life as peaceful, pain-free and dignified as possible.

It was this unique approach that attracted Jackie Scruggs to Friendship's Palliative Care Unit when planning the last months of life for her 90-year-old mother, Virginia, who suffered from dementia, diabetes, hypertension and other illnesses. Her mother lived on the unit for several months before passing away in September.

"The day she passed away, she looked at me and held my hand and she was gone," Scruggs recalls. "She knew she was loved because they were all so good to her at Friendship. They lotioned her twice a day and did things that would make a person comfortable. She was here longer than anyone thought she'd be, but the care had a lot to do with it."

Scruggs says the biggest factor in making her mother's stay more comfortable was the care from a team of nurses specially trained in palliative care. "The nurses, I don't have the words to describe



Jackie Scruggs (left) was so impressed with palliative care at Friendship for her mother that she now volunteers at Friendship.

them – they had such a gift and loving care for the patients," she says.

Friendship's Palliative Care Unit is designed to replicate the comforts of home. Recently renovated rooms feature porches and dedicated space for family members, who can come and go as they wish.

"The unit is very peaceful, a nice place if you have to be here," Scruggs says. "Families can feel good about leaving at night because the patients are well taken care of. For us, it was a team effort every step of the way – whether it had to do with meals, changing, bathing or even maintaining my mother's routine to get her hair done once a week."

Dr. Soheir Boshra, medical director of the unit, says the palliative approach to care and having a dedicated unit enables medical staff to provide the utmost attention to each patient. "Having these patients in one area with a specially trained staff gives patients the attention they need, the medical

focus they need and a consistent level of high-quality care."

Scruggs says the palliative approach gives families much-needed support during an emotional time.

"Friendship was there for us to talk and help us deal with the situation," Scruggs says. "They looked at things through our eyes and cared for our loved one with the dignity, pride and respect that they are due."

Scruggs is so grateful for the care that her mother received that she still returns to the Palliative Care Unit as a volunteer, providing music for a Bible study group consisting of women 85 to 100 years old.

"Music is so important to these ladies," she says. "My mother couldn't communicate, but she reacted to music."

*To learn more about palliative care at Friendship, call 540-265-2213.*

## Dr. Soheir Boshra

### More education needed about palliative care



Dr. Boshra is a leading advocate of palliative care.

Friendship's Palliative Care Unit – the only one in the region – mixes a comfortable, caring environment with expert medical care and round-the-clock assistance to make the final stage of life as peaceful, pain-free and dignified as possible.

Supervising the unit's medical care is Dr. Soheir Boshra, a Carilion physician specializing in geriatric and family practice. She visits Friendship regularly to take care of patients and counsel families. She serves as a liaison to local hospitals and helps to implement healthcare trends that will benefit patients.

"It is the physician's responsibility to keep the patient comfortable and communication lines open with staff and family," she says.

Dr. Boshra believes in palliative care so much, she wishes more physicians – let alone the public – knew about its benefits.

"Patients at that level of life need a different perspective, more dedicated attention," says Dr.

Boshra, medical director of Friendship's Palliative Care Unit. "Palliative care did not exist just a few years ago. It's a big step Friendship took to establish the unit. I would like to see palliative care units everywhere. I wish more doctors would look at palliative care because of the attention and medical focus on the patient."

When it comes to palliative care, the Egyptian native acknowledges that more education is needed. "Unfortunately, despite industry parameters that exist to determine palliative care, many physicians are not aware of the benefits for patients and families," she says.

She cites patients with severe dementia as one group that would benefit from palliative care. Ultimately, Dr. Boshra says, the doctor and the family must decide the best approach for patients.

"Palliative care simply provides the best possible quality of life for those at that level of function," she says.

# Independent Living

Seniors today have choices to maintain their independence

Hazel Hamilton tears up when she recalls the life she shared with her husband of 55 years, Edward.

“We did everything together,” she recalls, including ballroom and square dancing in their native Cleveland, listening to music or enjoying Smith Mountain Lake, where they lived for 23 years.

With Edward fighting cancer and no longer able to enjoy the lake life or take care of their home, the couple last year moved into one of Friendship Retirement Community’s independent living apartments.

“We knew the end was coming and we were looking for a place for me,” Mrs. Hamilton recalls. “We found this wonderful one-bedroom apartment. It was so nice and cheerful here that he said, ‘I’ll come along.’ He really enjoyed his last six months of life.”

Edward passed away a few months ago. But with Mrs. Hamilton already residing at Friendship, she didn’t have as much to worry about during this painful time.

“The main thing,” she says, “is that Ed knew where I was going to be and I could live independently, and that if anything happened to me and I couldn’t take care of myself, I would be taken care of here.”

Friendship offers 372 independent living units with one, two or three bedrooms, ranging from 435 to 1,325 square feet. Residents in these apartments live independently, as they would in a house or condominium, but have access to countless Friendship services, from on-site healthcare and dining options to an indoor pool



Hazel Hamilton found a comfortable home at Friendship following the death of her beloved Edward.

and fitness center and even free delivery of prescriptions. And when she wants to drive her car, shopping and services are around the corner. She also enjoys card games with fellow residents at Friendship’s Residents’ Center or lounges in her apartment building.

“I’m glad I don’t have a house to take care of,” she says.

Best of all, Mrs. Hamilton says, there is no long-term commitment or fees to enjoy the benefits. “Other places require large investments just for membership, let alone residency,” she says. “We moved right in without having to worry about that.”

*To learn more about independent living at Friendship, call Ken Srpan at 540-265-2230.*



## Benefits of Palliative Care

- Pain management
- Compassion
- Dignity
- Individual attention
- Family support and counsel

## Mrs. Hamilton says many factors influenced her decision to choose independent living at Friendship. Among them:

- No long-term commitment of fees.
- Not having to mow the grass, shovel snow or fix things.
- “It’s very beautiful here.”
- Free movies in Residents’ Center with popcorn, drinks and snacks.
- An on-site shop for cards, snacks and other small convenience items.
- The ability to have guests stay overnight. “There are very few rules here,” she says. “At other places you can’t have people stay overnight.”
- On-site café for breakfast or lunch.
- Meals on campus at nearby Eastwood Assisted Living if needed.
- Onsite laundry.
- Access to computers, copier and fax machine.
- Close location to airport and shopping.
- On-site security, enabling residents to pick up and leave, even for warmer winter locations.
- 24-hour maintenance.
- Transportation to shopping and events.

# Assisted Living

A short-term stay turns into the right solution



Mary Bullen stays active knitting caps for newborns.

An illness left Mary Bullen without the ability to walk.

After a lengthy hospital stay, she moved to Friendship Retirement Community's Eastwood Assisted Living facility while being treated by Friendship's Rehab department.

With on-site physical therapy and medical care, her condition improved and she soon regained enough strength to take steps again with the help of a walker.

For this former military wife, a short-term stay became permanent. After seeing the benefits and conveniences of the services provided by Friendship, she decided to move into one of Eastwood's 95 assisted-living units.

"My son and daughter-in-law told me I couldn't go back to my townhouse because I couldn't be by myself," she says. "After having been in the hospital for so long, I can understand what they were saying."

But, she quickly adds, "I've always lived by myself"

and wasn't ready to let go of her independence.

At Eastwood, Mrs. Bullen enjoys the best of both worlds – the privacy and convenience of her own apartment with much-needed, round-the-clock care from nurses and aides.

"The nurses keep me on the straight and narrow with pills," she quips.

Prior to becoming an Eastwood resident, Mrs. Bullen stayed at one of Friendship's furnished respite apartments, giving her and her family time to decide where she would live once she was healthy enough.

When her condition improved, the move was a short one – into an assisted-living unit in the same building with her own furnishings.

"It's like my own apartment except I don't have to worry about anything," she says. "I can go about as I please. The care is great, I have my own things, my own room, but if I need help I get it, like changing my bed, cleaning the apartment and laundry. All my meals are here, so I don't have to cook anymore, but I have a kitchen so I can cook if I want to."

Her new way of life has enabled Mrs. Bullen to continue a full schedule that includes volunteering at Roanoke Memorial Hospital, playing bridge, going shopping and knitting caps for premature babies.

When warmer weather returns, she looks forward to welcoming visitors on her first-floor patio.

"I do live a normal life," Mrs. Bullen says. "I'm eating better, I'm getting good care."

Eastwood's administrator, Susan O'Malley, R.N., says the progress has been remarkable. "When Mrs. Bullen first came, she was very weak, and we would take her to meals. Now, she can walk to meals and live an active life."

*To learn more about assisted living at Friendship, call Susan O'Malley, R.N. at 540-265-2244.*

## Friendship medical directors

*(continued from page 1)*

and get a better understanding of the patient and the patient gets care more promptly and accurately."

For Drs. Stavola and Nottingham, caring for the elderly began at an early age.

"When I was growing up, my parents were working and my grandmother was the caregiver," Dr. Stavola says. "I've always had a very strong comfort level interacting with our patients partly because of that."

Both say they are fond of the elderly population, which has its own challenges and rewards.

"As physicians we are trained to cure disease," Dr. Stavola says. "When you're working in a long-term care facility sometimes you have to have different goals – quality of life issues, functional status, little things you can do that are just as important, but you have to accept the mindset that there are things here I'm not going to cure and there are things we can't make better, but we can focus on things that we *can* make better and improve quality of life."

"For me the enjoyment of working with older folks is that I have been around them for a long time," adds Dr. Nottingham. "As folks get older, it becomes a matter of us helping them understand what's good for them, but also making sure we help them achieve what they want for themselves."

*To learn more about medical care at Friendship, call 540-265-2213.*

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*The right time. The right care. The right place.*

