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Transitions Navigator role to enhance the coordination and facilitation of patient care services between local organizations

Muskegon, Michigan, October 20, 2020—Leadership of Harbor Hospice have hired Muskegon resident Sarah Hicks, LMSW, as the organization's new Social Worker Transitions Navigator for Harbor Hospice and Harbor Palliative Care.

It is a seamless next step for Sarah who spent the past 6 years working with Mercy Health-Hackley and McClees Clinic in roles as Mental Health Contractor and Social Worker/Case Manager.

"I'm incredibly excited to bring my experience as a social worker in West Michigan to Harbor Hospice and Palliative Care to help provide support and resources to our families, patients and caregivers," says Hicks who also received her bachelors degree and a Master of Social Work and Leadership from Grand Valley State University. "I look forward to being able to build supportive relationships during the end-of-life journey for our community and families."

A significant part of Sarah's work will be establishing patient information and follow up visits for hospital patients who are eligible clinically but need guidance and time to work through their acceptance of hospice or palliative care.

"Harbor Hospice is excited to provide this new resource to our community!" says Sue Houseman, President and CEO of Harbor Hospice and Harbor Palliative Care. "With Sarah's expertise in clinical social work, she will be able to help patients and families explore their goals of care –matching them with care and services that are in alignment with their wishes and enhance their overall quality of life."

This alignment will include initial social work assessments identified at hospital intake for hospice or palliative care. Sarah will also conduct hospital inpatient visits to coordinate Advance Care Planning and help patients and caregivers establish their goals for care.

"This new role will enhance the coordination and facilitation of services between our organizations as our patients transition out of the hospital setting," says Kim Maguire, CNO and VP of Patient Care Services and Patient Safety Officer for Mercy Health Muskegon. "It will strengthen Mercy Health's partnership with Harbor Hospice and, more importantly, it will improve the care they provide together to the patients and families they serve by coordinating and providing the right care at the right time."

Harbor Hospice served its first patient in 1983. Today over 100 staff provide hospice and palliative care to nearly 1,400 patients every year in homes and residential facilities in five counties in West Michigan and at the organization's 14-bed Poppen Hospice Residence in Muskegon. Almost 100 volunteers provide services ranging from helping patients with errands to providing respite care and spiritual and grief support. Headquarters for its administrative offices are in Muskegon.

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