The Ken Hamilton Caregivers Center
Caring for the Family Caregiver

Understandably, the primary focus of hospitals and staff is the care of patients. However, often next to the patient are family caregivers providing support and reassurance to their loved one and who are often in need of their own support and comfort.

A Sense of Urgency:
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a third of family caregivers report difficulties in finding personal time and managing emotional and physical stress. More than half of family caregivers report that their health got worse while taking care of loved ones, and two-thirds put off seeing a doctor because of their caregiver responsibilities. What’s more, roughly half of caregivers say they’re looking for guidance in caring for the patient and in caring for themselves. Northern Westchester Hospital’s Ken Hamilton Caregivers Center was set up with the goal of meeting caregivers’ needs.

Identifying the Support Caregivers Require:
When Marian Hamilton’s husband Ken was diagnosed with a rare, fatal form of cancer, she spent the next two years caring for him and raising her two teenage daughters. This challenging experience led her to approach NWH about setting up a support program that could help caregivers navigate their role. Hospital administration supported the idea and focus groups were set up to help define the critical components the center could provide, such as non-judgmental, emotional support; guidance through the hospital system; and referrals to community services. The physical space of The Ken Hamilton Caregivers Center was designed to be an oasis of rest and relief for caregivers. The staff includes a full-time social worker to oversee the day-to-day operations of the center and a team of trained volunteer coaches. In all, the center is a place for plan of care meetings, end of life discussions, discharge planning, advance directives, caregiver support groups, resource referrals and much, much more.

Results:
The KHCC staff has grown from three to 34 trained volunteer coaches. The number of people served has risen exponentially: from 500 family interactions in 2006 to 8,500 in 2014. Over 10 years, The KHCC staff will have had approximately 52,000 family interactions, demonstrating the vast need for caregiver support.

Awards have been numerous including:
• Best Practice Program from the Caregivers Action Network
• Quality of Life Award from the United Way
• National Best Practice Awards for Best Program Replication and Best Practice for Family, Friends and Social Support by the Planetree Organization

National 2014 Planetree Best Practice Award Winner: Best Program Replication and Best Practice for Family, Friends and Social Support

continued >
The Center for Patient-Centered Innovation

Replication Program:
As people and hospitals throughout the country have shown interest in founding a caregiver support program, The KHCC mission has included sharing its model. A formal Replication Program helps hospitals replicate The KHCC based on their own needs. Currently, 11 hospitals have implemented similar programs, vastly increasing the reach and impact of the urgently needed concept.

Replicating Healthcare Organizations
The following organizations have participated in the Replication Program creating Family Caregiver Centers in their own facilities:

- Danbury Hospital, Connecticut
- Englewood Hospital, New Jersey
- Hospital of Pennsylvania - UPENN
- Mercy Medical Center, Iowa
- Midland Hospital, Michigan
- Montefiore Medical Center, New York (2 Centers)
- Overlook Hospital, New Jersey
- Shore Medical Center, New Jersey
- Westchester Medical Center, New York
- White Plains Hospital, New York

To learn about bringing this program to your facility, contact Jill Gottlieb, The KHCC Replication Coordinator, 914.242.8128 or jgottlieb@nwhc.net

“Your quiet rooms were so peaceful and helped us take some time out for ourselves. The staff of coaches is so caring, loving, helpful, wonderful and understanding that it made it easier for us to get through this terrible time in our lives.”

– Linda, Caregiver

“We are thrilled that we had the opportunity to participate in The KHCC Replication Program – seeing the program first hand was invaluable. All the materials, lessons learned and the opportunity to collaborate with other Centers has helped us to get started and bring a Caregivers Center to our community. We now say ‘what did we do when we didn’t have a Caregivers Center!”

– Replicating Institution

Replication Site Visit Includes:
- Presentation of creation, design and implementation of The KHCC with Marian Hamilton, Founder and key hospital stakeholders
- Center and support program operations
- Recruiting and selecting volunteers
- Shadowing of social worker and coaches
- Metrics for success
- Referral sources and community agency involvement
- Strategies for establishing sustainability and philanthropic funding
- Supporting the professional staff

Ongoing support for Replicating Healthcare Organizations:
- Conference calls with experts to offer ongoing guidance, support, and problem-solving strategies
- On-line participation in The KHCC Caregivers Center Consortium
- Invitation to participate in semi-annual Caregivers Center Symposium