

Soundbite script - Understanding hospice

Dr. Sarah Whelan, medical director, OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care

"A lot of people come on hospice care right at the end. And people will think, oh, you're going to die within a couple of days if you go on hospice care, and while that's true, unfortunately, those patients didn't get to benefit from all that hospice has to offer," says Dr. Sarah Whelan, medical director for OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care in Rockford, Illinois. "But you can live quite a while on hospice care. Some patients will live past that six-month mark, as we've seen with Jimmy Carter, and that's, I think, a good thing. They're benefiting from the services we have to offer and having that quality time that they want at home and hopefully their symptoms managed so they can enjoy that time at home." (:37)

Dr. Sarah Whelan, medical director, OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care

"We just have to make sure they are continuing to want that non-aggressive symptom management approach and not returning to the hospital and that we see evidence of disease progression and more decline in their function and physical abilities." (:16)

Dr. Sarah Whelan, medical director, OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care

"I really think hospice care is acceptance, more than giving up accepting that you're very sick and that the end may be near, but it's choosing to have some control over those last days of your life. And doing the things that you would like to do rather than struggling, along with aggressive medical care and things that might make you feel worse, but trying to do things that will help you feel better, spend those days how you would like." (:28)

Dr. Sarah Whelan, medical director, OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care

"There's more than just medical things at the end of life. There's a lot of spiritual and social and family things that people need to work through and I think hospice does a really good job of helping people prepare for the end of their life and to help write that last chapter the way that they want to." (:17)