Letter from Liz

During this time of year, I like to reflect and make time to be grateful. This year I am thankful for my family and the 3 years I have had working alongside talented colleagues in a community that I now call home. **My Bluegrass Care Navigators co-workers are individuals that I can trust to work hard and provide the best care to patients every day.** For us, 2017 has been an exceptional year. Through dedication and compassionate care, we continue to help a growing number of hospice patients and families during their end-of-life journey. For those who are not in need of hospice care, our helpful palliative and in-home services continue to grow.

Through the prestigious national awards we received this year – Modern Healthcare’s Best Places to Work, Hospice Honors Elite and a 2017 Circle of Life Award™ – we know our employees, families and health care partners think we are the best.

Knowing more patients need and deserve the unique care that we provide, we added two new services – **Bluegrass Home Primary Care**, featuring Dr. Jennifer Skorupa, board certified in both Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine; and **Bluegrass Adult Day Health Care**, with our first center opening soon in Frankfort. Both these services will help our loved ones to live comfortably at home.

Home primary care includes medical care and management of chronic conditions and disabilities for patients who are “home-limited.” The Adult Day Health Care facility, for adults who have physical or mental conditions resulting from age or illness, will feature on-site nurses and clinical caregivers as well as activities, snacks and hot, catered meals. Often this gives family members a caregiving break, and gives loved ones companionship and socialization during the day.

Amid all this activity, we always remember those who are at the center of our work – patients and families. We are humbled that they place their trust in us, and so grateful that we receive inspiring notes like the following:

“**Your entire staff ... displayed an incredible degree of professionalism and compassion** in the management of my mother’s illness...You should be very proud of these folks – we leaned heavily on them and they really came through for us. What a wonderful group of people.”

*Stephen Hughes,* son of patient Margaret Hughes

“I am writing to let you know how much we appreciated the care and support we received from your hospice staff throughout Mom’s final illness...Each of the people on the team was genuinely caring and interested in helping Mom remain comfortable...I know she appreciated the efforts of all the people on her team. The entire team was so incredibly responsive in getting any medicine, supplies or equipment that would help Mom.”

*Robert Sparks,* son of patient Susan Sparks

In 2018, we will celebrate 40 years of hospice care. Because of you, we are one of the oldest and most trusted hospices in the country. As we continue our legacy of caring, know that we are grateful for your support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and my team of co-workers, I thank you.

Sincerely,

Liz Fowler, President & CEO
Bluegrass Care Navigators
Thank you, Kentucky Colonels!

The Kentucky Colonels organization has granted Bluegrass Care Navigators $19,100 for the purchase of patient ventilators and a humidifier. “We are happy to support the important work that you are doing. We sincerely hope his commitment will help your organization better serve the citizens of Kentucky,” said General John Shropshire, a Kentucky Colonels trustee. Through its Good Works Program, the Kentucky Colonels distributed $1.5 million to support 171 worthy causes this year, which will help more than 3 million people across the state.

Bluegrass Care Navigators Volunteer Honored

Shirley Bubany was looking for a way to repay hospice for the compassionate care they gave her husband, so she began making visits to patients in their homes and nursing facilities. Next, it was volunteering, which included respite care, 11th hour service, transporting patients and helping to raise funds.

But it was her talent as a tailor that led the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization to honor her with a Specialized Service Award at its annual gathering in San Diego. Shirley decided to sew “comfort bears” out of patients’ clothing, 147 bears so far, which then become treasured keepsakes. And she has handwritten nearly 2,500 anniversary notes to patients’ families.

Thank you, Shirley, for your tireless efforts to bring joy to both patients and families. You are an inspiration to others and your recent honor is well deserved.

Tell Us Your Hospice Story

We are preparing for our 40th anniversary next year and would like to know how our services have touched your life. Please take a quick moment to tell us how our staff, our services or our support has made a difference in your life or the life of someone you love, at: bgcarenav.org/40voices

Brothers Donate Estate Proceeds to Hospice

Brothers Jeff and Tim Lizer saw the care their parents received from Bluegrass Care Navigators and wanted to thank us. They recently held an estate sale of the contents of their family home, and donated the check to Bluegrass Care Navigators. The brothers encourage others to do the same as a way of saying thanks. Thank you, Jeff and Tim, for the donation, and for the honor of caring for your parents.
Holiday Grief Tips
Mary McKenzie, ACSW, ACHP-SW, Bereavement Counselor

As the holidays surround us, the absence of a loved one reminds us that it is not going to be the same this year. It is a time of mental worry and rehearsal of what the season may bring. This may be especially difficult when social contacts and even family think, “you should be over it by now.”

It is a season of uncertainty and loneliness, especially for the elderly grieving an accumulated loss of friends and family. Major changes – a move from the farm to town, failing health or not being able to drive anymore – only contribute to emotional pain.

The holidays have a tendency to make everyone relive childhood feelings surrounding memories and traditions. It is important to have a plan of small changes that may be possible to help decrease stress, while still honoring the holiday and the deceased. Here are some suggestions for holiday planning:

1. Realistically consider how much energy you may have. Grieving is exhausting.
2. Be flexible for ongoing changes.
3. Streamline: Use a deli, or go to a restaurant.
4. Give yourself permission to scale down, and allow others to help.
5. Consider making some new traditions.
6. Buy smaller gifts, or give to an angel tree in your loved one’s memory.
7. When invited to a party, say that you “hope” to attend. Go by yourself, so you can leave when you want.
8. Remember ritual.

Ritual can be a very powerful method for honoring and remembering a loved one. Consider a toast to them at dinner, or write them cards to place on the tree or grave. Place holly or greens around their picture to show honor.

While the holidays are difficult, meaningful learning experiences for sharing about the life and personality of the deceased can help one cope during this, and all seasons of life.

Bourbon Chase a Scenic Run for Charity

Congratulations to our Bourbon Chase runners! Our agency was one of four charities for the 12-person relay race, which covers some 200 miles of Kentucky countryside. Three teams ran for us – Bluegrass Care Navigating All Night Long, The Reformed Runners and The Deloitterers – and raised more than $16,400.

Thanks to the Lexington Bourbon Society, bourbon lovers and bourbon beginners savored delightful tastings from famed distilleries Buffalo Trace and Four Roses. Another tasting, hosted by Distilled Living, featured a pairing with cookies, proving that there are many options for enjoying bourbon! The event raised nearly $60,000 for the care of the seriously ill and their families in Lexington.
Care That’s Right for You or Your Loved One.

**Bluegrass Extra Care**
**Bluegrass Home Primary Care**
**Bluegrass Adult Day Health Care**
**Bluegrass Transitional Care**
**Bluegrass Palliative Care**
**Bluegrass Hospice Care**
**Bluegrass Grief Care**

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### EVENTS CALENDAR

#### JANUARY

2 **Compassionate Friends — Lexington**  
*First Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.* Support group for parents, siblings or grandparents who have experienced the death of a child. Contact: Suzie McDonald, 859.576.7680. Center for Grief and Education, 2409 Greatstone Point

2 **Perinatal Loss Grief Group — Lexington**  
*First Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.* Support group for parents who have experienced loss due to miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death. Contact: Debbie Mueller, 859.260.6904. Center for Grief and Education, 2409 Greatstone Point

2 **Understanding Grief — Pikeville**  
*First Tuesday of each month, 10–11:30 a.m.* Brief educational program offering an introduction to grief information and hospice bereavement services. Contact: Susan Houston, LCSW, shouston@bgcarenav.org

4 **Compassionate Friends — Frankfort**  
*First Thursday and third Monday of each month, 6 p.m.* Support group for parents, siblings or grandparents who have experienced the death of a child. Contact: Karen Cantrell, 502.320.6438

26 **Bundle Up with Bourbon and Blues — Lexington**  
*7–11 p.m.* Tasty cuisine, music and dancing. Keeneland Sales Pavilion. RSVP at: bluegrasscarenavigators.eventbrite.com

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### FEBRUARY

**February is American Heart Month**, a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health.  
*Learn more: [www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/index.html)*

**6 Children’s Grief Support Group — Lexington**  
*Meets Tuesdays, ending March 13, 4:30–5:30 p.m.* Designed for children and adolescents who have experienced the death of a loved one. Contact Kristen Hamilton: khamilton@bgcarenav.org; or Holly Bender: hbender@bgcarenav.org

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### MARCH

**March is National Social Work Month**, supporting a profession dedicated to enhancing the well-being of others and meeting the basic needs of all people, especially the most vulnerable in our society.  
*Learn more: [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)*

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Learn more about upcoming events:  
**[www.bgcarenav.org](http://www.bgcarenav.org)** | **855.492.0812**