

## PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VALDESE/LENOIR** – Burke Hospice & Palliative Care and Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care announced to employees, volunteers and donors on Thursday that the two organizations are exploring the possibility of becoming one organization.

Both boards of directors approved the decision.

Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care Board of Directors Chairperson Marc Carpenter said the two organizations already mirror each other in many ways and feels the unity between the two will benefit the communities and people served.

“We are excited about the possibility of joining with Burke Hospice & Palliative Care to form one organization that will increase our ability to meet the needs of our communities,” Carpenter said. “We share very similar missions, visions and values and feel this integration will provide a number of advantages to both organizations that will ensure our communities continue to receive the expert care they expect and deserve.”

The vision for the collaborative partnership is to integrate two like-minded community-owned hospice and palliative medicine providers in order to have a greater impact on serious illness and end-of-life care in the communities served.

“Both of these programs have long placed importance on providing care and compassion to those facing life-limiting illness,” said Burke Hospice & Palliative Care Executive Director Myschell Pearson. “As healthcare continually evolves, so must local hospice organizations. The similarities in how we approach servanthood, desire to protect the integrity of what hospice was meant to be from inception, and dedication to preserve true community-based hospice and palliative care can be more concretely secured through the integration of the two agencies. We look forward to developing a new legacy of top-quality compassion and care for all those in the communities we serve.”

Burke Hospice & Palliative Care Chairperson Greg Jones, MD, a radiation oncologist, has worked with both organizations in multiple capacities for nearly 30 years. He describes the two providers as regional leaders in hospice and palliative care. As a referring physician to both organizations, Dr. Jones said both groups place emphasis on patient care and priority to communicate with referring physicians and/or other individuals involved in the patient's care.

"In our exploration of this possibility, we have observed a mutuality of goals and purpose that should lead to a firm stand for years to come," Dr. Jones said. "I feel certain that the people of our extensive service area will continue to be pleased by the outstanding patient and family care that a unified organization will be able to provide and the new consolidated entity will be stronger and more secure into the future as a result of the alliance."

Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care CEO Cathy Swanson, who would serve the same role in the new partnership, said the peer organizations have a long history of working well together. "For nearly four decades we've had a collaborative and supportive relationship with Burke Hospice & Palliative Care," Swanson said. "A future partnership will be built on a strong foundation of trust and mutual respect. Together, we can ensure excellent care for people dealing with serious illnesses."

A timeline has yet to be finalized but leadership at both organizations expect to complete the legal partnership sometime in 2021. Should the two providers combine into one organization, a new name will be announced for the group.

There are no plans to close any of the locations and infrastructure details are still being determined.