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**HOSPICE OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD BRINGS EXPANDED SERVICES
TO THE ISLAND BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER**

MARTHA'S VINEYARD – May 28, 2009 – The executive leadership of Hospice of Martha's Vineyard (Hospice) announced today that they will be expanding end-of-life care for the residents of Martha's Vineyard to include hospice services covered by Medicare, Medicaid and other healthcare insurers. This enhancement of services will be made possible by an innovative alliance between hospice and Hospice & Palliative Care of Cape Cod (H&PCCC).

While Hospice executives had explored the possibility of becoming a Medicare-certified hospice provider earlier on, they chose not to do so because Hospice would no longer have been able to provide the free service that has been its hallmark. Plus it would have compromised Hospice's open-door policy which allows it to serve patients regardless of prognosis or the projected length of a patient's life. The only solution was to align with H&PCCC which embraced their established model of free care and early access to end-of-life services.

"The important thing for our patients to know," stated Terre Young, Executive Director, Hospice, "is that this is not a change, it's an enhancement. We will continue to serve all patients without charge, just as we've done for over 28 years. The difference is, when—and if—a patient wants to access insurance benefits, we now have a way for him or her to do so."

To date, residents of Martha's Vineyard have not had access to a hospice insurance benefit without leaving the Island. But the new Hospice insurance will provide increased coverage for medications; physical, speech and occupational therapies; medical equipment (hospital beds, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.); home health aide time; physician house calls; inpatient respite care for caregivers; and up to 24-hour nursing care in times of crisis. All of this will be provided by Hospice at no additional cost to patients.

Through the unique alliance with H&PCCC, Island residents will continue to be able to access the free expertise provided by Hospice from the day of diagnosis. But as their disease progresses, they will now have a choice as to whether or not to access the hospice insurance benefit. When a patient chooses the hospice benefit, the two organizations will collaborate at all levels to ensure continuity of care and a seamless transition for patients and families.

Judy Mayhew, a longstanding Hospice board member, said, "I am especially pleased with this alliance because we can still offer our time-tested services in advance of insurance eligibility or in the absence of insurance. This special model of care has been a longstanding part of the Island social service net, and it will continue."

Although H&PCCC and Hospice are embarking on this collaboration together, each organization will maintain its independent status, identity, mission, and philanthropic pursuits.

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Hospice of Martha's Vineyard, founded in 1981, is a free, community-supported program whose mission is to meet the unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs of all who are facing advanced illness and loss. Its founding principle of providing all care free of charge without insurance reimbursement enables it to serve anyone in need with a life-limiting illness. For more information call 508-693-0189 or go to www.hospiceofmv.org.

Hospice & Palliative Care of Cape Cod is Cape Cod's first hospice organization offering expert care, comfort and compassion for those living with serious illness. Founded in 1981, it is unique in its exclusive dedication to providing a wide range of end-of-life programs and service throughout Cape Cod and southeastern Plymouth County. In 1986, Hospice & Palliative Care of Cape Cod became one of the country's earliest Medicare-certified hospice providers. For more information call 508-957-0200 or go to www.hospicecapecod.org.