



## Medical Social Work Support

Saint Joseph's Hospital recognizes that patients experiencing a serious illness are faced with many complicated issues and decision. This illness most certainly affects the family as well. Many specialized services are in place for support and assistance.

The Palliative Care Unit offers specialized services to support patients and their families during these trying life periods. An "interdisciplinary team" comprised of members of various professions provide services in an effort to better meet the patient and family's individualized needs. Members include: physicians, nurses, therapists, clergy, social workers, case managers, nursing assistants, and even trained volunteers.

A medical social worker, as a member of the team, is available to assist patients and their families related to specific needs regarding financial and legal issues. Additional services include emotional and grief support, supportive counseling, education and family communication. Information regarding a variety of community resources can be provided, as applicable.

The social worker can also educate and assist patient and families regarding advance directives, such as a **Living Will** or **Health Care Power of Attorney**.

A **Living Will** is written instructions that explain your pre-determines wishes for health care should you become incapacitated due to a terminal illness or vegetative mental condition.

A **Health Care Power of Attorney** is a written document which communicates your health preferences and appoints an agent to make decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated.

**If you would like to meet with the Palliative Care Unit social worker, please ask your nurse to request this assistance or call 715-387-7890.**