

Soundbite script – President Carter celebrates 100th birthday while in hospice

Sarah Whelan, MD, medical director for OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care, Rockford, Illinois

"President Carter's hospice process has really opened a lot of doors for conversation, and it really is about conversation. Many people feel that once you go on hospice care, the end is near. It's a few days away, or maybe a few weeks. I think it (President Carter) is really helping to dispel one of the biggest myths with hospice care – that you're imminently dying if you go on hospice care. But that's not the case in all situations." (:28)

Sarah Whelan, MD, medical director for OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care, Rockford, Illinois

"The goal of hospice is to help patients live out whatever days they have left with the best quality of life, help them obtain whatever goals they have left, if possible, and to manage their symptoms." (:13)

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"When you do go on hospice care, often we go through a process of de-prescribing some medications, and that can be scary, because you've been taking these medications for many years thinking this is how I have to live if I want to keep living. And when the goals shift from curing a disease to managing symptoms and comfort and quality of life, some of those medications really aren't necessary anymore, and they may actually be causing side effects that are decreasing your quality of life." (:27)

Sarah Whelan, MD, medical director for OSF Hospice and Outpatient Palliative Care, Rockford, Illinois

"As a hospice doctor, I feel that everybody should be in hospice care at the end of life. The actual dying process itself often has symptoms that can be managed to allow for comfort for the patient, but also comfort for the family." (:13)