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# Regional Hospice's new facility to open in January

By [Maja Tarateta](#), [Regional Hospice](#) on December 26, 2014 in [Highlights](#), [Latest News](#), [Social](#) · 0 Comments

## About author



by [Maja Tarateta](#),  
 Regional Hospice



*Regional Hospice's new facility to open in Danbury.*

In each of the 12 private suites, sunlight streams through French doors that open to a patio overlooking acres of woods and gardens. A few feet away, families can heat a loved one's favorite meal in a fully equipped kitchen. Down the hall is a cozy dining room with a professional chef to cook for family and friends. There's a chapel for quiet meditation and a library for reading or catching up on business. There is also a spa with a specially designed comfort tub, a hair salon, a room for massage therapy.

In fact, every element in the new Regional Hospice and Home Care Center for Comfort Care and Healing, located at 30 Milestone Road in Danbury, was designed for peace, tranquility and spending meaningful time with loved ones approaching the end of life.

Starting next month, Regional Hospice and Home Care will accept its first patients at the new state-of-the-art facility — Connecticut's first and only nonprofit, family focused, all-private-suite hospice center — heralding a new era in options for end-of-life care for people in the state.

The construction of the center was funded entirely by donations and grants to



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cover the approximately \$12-million cost.

More than 1,000 patients, many of them children, are expected to come to the 36,000-square-foot hospice center during the first year. The 12 pet-friendly private suites, each with views of the gardens and grounds, "were designed to look and feel like a home, not an institution," said Cynthia E. Roy MS, LCSW, CHA, president and CEO of Regional Hospice.

Everything from the cozy, home-like Ethan Allen furniture to the serene paint colors evokes a sense of peace. Paintings on the walls behind beds were designed to hide medical equipment. Beds can wheel anywhere in the center: the patios, outside, wherever patients might want to go. Indeed, the hospice's leadership designed the center to fill the gap for those who would like to experience hospice care outside of a hospital setting but for a variety of reasons are not able to spend their final days in their own homes.

"From the years I have worked in hospice care, I know that being responsible for a loved one's care at the end of life can be emotionally and physically draining. Sometimes, a patient would rather be in a setting where a loved one is not responsible for all of their care needs but can instead focus on spending quality time with each other," explained Deborah Ryan MSW, LCSW, ACHP-SW, vice president of clinical operations at Regional Hospice. "Many times, pain or other symptoms can be managed most effectively at the hospice center. And sometimes, when the patient is a young parent or a child, the family may choose to have care provided at the center while still being able to be there together. Families frequently prefer that the bereaved children not have memories of the death occurring in the home."

The Center for Comfort Care and Healing offers a patient suite designed specifically to care for a sick child, where a family can stay 24 hours a day, so Mom and Dad can be just that — mom and dad — while specially trained hospice nurses and nursing assistants provide round-the-clock care. The center's hospice- and palliative-care trained medical director, physicians and APRNs are available 24/7. In addition to nursing and palliative care, the team provides emotional, spiritual and volunteer support, including the alternative modalities of massage, therapeutic touch, music, and pet partners.

The construction of the center came after nearly seven years of work by Regional Hospice and other advocates in end-of-life care to modernize hospice legislation in the state of Connecticut. Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and former Gov. M. Jodi Rell are among those who supported the changes in legislation, which passed unanimously in the legislature's Regulations Review Committee in 2012. After the changes were then passed in the Connecticut State House and Senate, Mr. Malloy signed the bill into law.

Ms. Roy said she expects patients will come to the new hospice center from a 50-mile radius surrounding Danbury, including Connecticut and Westchester/Putnam counties in New York.

In addition, "Regional Hospice will continue to serve patients with hospice, palliative and comfort care in their own homes, nursing homes, assisted living homes, group homes, and hospitals, as it has done for more than 30 years," she said. "The new center is an additional option for those who seek it."

The Center for Comfort Care and Healing will also house the Healing Hearts Center for Grief & Loss, a program of Regional Hospice that provides grief support services to the community at no charge, bringing all of Regional Hospice's programs and services under one roof for the first time. Many Healing Hearts participants are children who have lost parents or other loved ones, so the center's child-friendly atmosphere includes a children's activity room. Outside, in the memorial garden, the Healing Hearts Playground offers a custom-designed playscape where youngsters can benefit from sunshine and exercise.





"All of us at Regional Hospice feel truly blessed to have the opportunity to bring this amazing center to reality," said Ms. Roy. "We know it will be a place where patients and their families can come and feel comfort, care and healing at the end of life. It's a privilege to be able to provide this."

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