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dignityhealth.org

November 14, 2016

Marlene M. von Friederichs-Fitzwater, Ph.D., MPH  
Founder/Executive Director  
Health Communication Research Institute, Inc. 5025  
J Street, Suite 311  
Sacramento, CA 95819

Dear Dr. von Friederichs-Fitzwater:

Dignity Health is pleased to support Joshua's House, a hospice house for the terminally ill homeless, on the Loaves & Fishes campus in Sacramento. We are aware that, on average, one homeless person dies on the streets every week in Sacramento County and that number has steadily increased in the past few years. This translates into rates three times higher than the housed population in Sacramento County. Approximately 38% die alone on the streets and 35% die in emergency rooms or as inpatients.

Homelessness is a significant health concern in our region and we believe a hospice house is a much-needed addition to Sacramento's continuum of care. No person should ever be forced to live their final days, weeks or months living on the streets without adequate access to services that provide comfort and dignity.

Dignity Health agrees that having a safe, comfortable, home-like facility for our terminally ill homeless neighbors where they would receive hospice care, have private rooms, regular meals and opportunities to interact with each other as well as caring volunteers would allow them to die with dignity and respect. The opportunity to keep their beloved pets with them is an added benefit.

Equally important, Joshua's House would serve to significantly reduce healthcare costs while providing quality hospice care to those who are terminally ill in the homeless community. Joshua's House would provide a safe place for Dignity Health and other local hospitals to discharge terminally ill homeless patients with the knowledge that patients would receive quality hospice care! Hospice care significantly reduces the costs of re-occurring ambulance usage, ER visits and short term hospital stays.

We are pleased and pleased to partner with you to bring much-needed hospice care to our homeless community and ensure that the poorest among us have an opportunity to die with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ashley Brand", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Brand  
Director, Community Health and Outreach  
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