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Highmark awards Hospice grant

The Highmark Foundation has awarded a grant totaling \$62,326 to Family Hospice and Palliative Care to develop a palliative care program called Transitions. The program, developed in collaboration with Bidwell Presbyterian Church and North Side Christian Health Center, will educate African-Americans on the benefits of hospice and palliative care services and how to obtain greater access to care.

The program will also assist families who wish to enroll seriously ill loved ones into services to alleviate suffering and provide caregivers with support. Transitions will be housed at Family Hospice's Anderson Manor site (1423 Liverpool St., North Side) and Bidwell United Presbyterian Church (1020

Liverpool St., North Side).

Many reasons contribute to the under usage of services by African-Americans, including cultural mistrust with the health care system, influence of family, spirituality and finances, leading more African-Americans to die in hospitals compared to other populations. Allegheny County data indicates that only 5 percent of the African-American population utilizes hospice services.

"The Highmark Foundation recognizes the importance of everyone having access to hospice and palliative care services," said Highmark Foundation President Yvonne Cook. "For those living with life-limiting illnesses, we want to do what we can to remove barriers to appropriate and compassionate care."