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Hospice Care Expert to Lead VITAS Innovative Hospice Care(R) of Southeast Michigan

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DETROIT, May 11 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- [VITAS](#) Innovative Hospice Care(R) of Southeast Michigan has named Elaine Howard, RN, MSN, as general manager. Howard will lead day-to-day operations of the program and manage all marketing efforts, driving [education](#) about quality hospice care within the community.

"In the Southeast Michigan area, people aren't fully aware that hospice is a viable and positive option for those at the end of life," said Howard. "This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It gives me a chance to inform people of the excellent care we

can provide for their loved ones."

VITAS' program in Southeast Michigan provides unique services focused on meeting the specific needs of a diverse population of patients and [families](#) at the end of life. "Our staff connects with patients through different churches and cultivates deeper relationships with congregation members," commented Howard. "With the largest population of Muslims in the nation, we are mindful of those important cultural issues." Howard knows that reaching underserved and diverse communities requires sensitivity to end-of-life traditions.

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"I've worked in hospice care for 18 years and enjoyed every one," Howard said. Before joining VITAS Innovative Hospice Care of Southeast Michigan, Howard held positions with two other Michigan hospices. She was director of professional services, overseeing day-to-day activities for three hospice teams and 150 hospice patients. She also held the director of clinical services position, providing direction, supervision, and education to all clinical personnel, including quality and coordination of services. Prior to her hospice career, Howard provided comprehensive care to homebound patients.

Howard graduated from the [University of Detroit Mercy](#) in Detroit, Michigan, and the University of Phoenix in Southfield, Michigan, with a [Master of Science](#) in Nursing.

"Working at VITAS isn't a job, it's a calling," Howard said. "I'll continue to work with the Southeast Michigan program to educate people that VITAS is an accessible and positive resource for those seeking options for end-of-life care."

About Hospice

Because hospice is not a "place" as many believe, VITAS caregivers make visits throughout the community to care for patients in their own home, in [nursing homes](#), and in assisted living communities. Hospice is provided in the home to better provide comfort, pain control and symptom management for a patient at the end of life. In fact, recent research published by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization found that most Americans would prefer to receive end-of-life care at home and think hospice professionals are the most knowledgeable in helping them do so.

About VITAS Innovative Hospice Care(R)

VITAS Innovative Hospice Care(R), a pioneer and leader in the hospice movement since 1978, is the nation's largest provider of end-of-life care. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, VITAS operates 42 hospice programs in 16 states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin). VITAS, which has evolved from its founding as a volunteer organization by a United Methodist minister and an [oncology](#) nurse, today employs 8,640 professionals who care for terminally ill patients daily, primarily in the patients' homes, but also in the company's 25 inpatient hospice units as well as in hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living communities/residential care facilities for the elderly. At the conclusion of the first quarter of 2007, VITAS reported an average daily census of 11,309;

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VITAS served more than 63,000 patients throughout all of 2006. The name, VITAS (pronounced VEE-tahs), is derived from the [Latin](#) word for lives. It symbolizes the VITAS mission: To preserve the quality of life for those who have a limited time to live.

Source: VITAS Innovative Hospice Care

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