Working
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Rewarding Experience

Stephanie Lynn gives plenty of hugs on the job -- and a lot of kindness and comfort.

As a hospice nurse for Rockville-based Jewish Social Service Agency, she administers medication and teaches families and caregivers what to do to help a dying patient. "I do frequently hug patients and their families and they hug me," she said.

"Sometimes we just sit and hold hands and talk," she said. "That is a hospice nursing intervention. That is what they need."

Lynn, a registered nurse, sees about three or four patients a day, mostly in the Chevy Chase-Bethesda area.

Among the pluses of the job are that she has one-to-one relationships with patients and that their care requires a creative, interdisciplinary approach. "I like trying to stay one step ahead of the disease," said Lynn, while keeping the patient comfortable, at home and as much as possible in control.

Despite some emotional boundaries, Lynn says she feels sadness at death, sometimes after caring for a patient for a year or more.

Still the career is a rewarding one -- to provide comfort and to help a family feel its loved one "went peacefully."

-- Vickie Elmer