

Newsday

LONG ISLAND

50¢

TUESDAY, FEB. 26, 2008 | LONG ISLAND EDITION

NEWSDAY.COM

LETTERS

Palliative care vs. hospice care

In reference to "Hospital's tranquil base for incurable" [News, Feb. 19], the article stated that palliative medicine differs from hospice care in that it's a field of medicine with a body of knowledge specializing in the comprehensive treatment of suffering.

As president and chief executive of Hospice Care Network, one of the largest hospice organizations in New York State, which has been serving individuals with terminal illnesses in Nassau, Suffolk and Queens since 1988, I would like to clarify the definitions of "palliative medicine" and "hospice."

The field of palliative care has evolved from the knowledge gained from more than 30 years of caring for people with advanced illnesses in hospice organizations. Our entire focus of hospice is to help alleviate the patients' suffering by addressing their physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs, as well as to support and help the family, to understand the patients' illness, prepare them for their loved ones' death, and help them after the patient has died to deal with their loss and help them to move on with their lives.

*Maureen Hinkelman
Woodbury*

Editor's note: The writer is president and chief executive of Hospice Care Network.