



# No One Dies Alone

UChicago Medicine AdventHealth La Grange is proud to announce the return of the national, volunteer-centered No One Dies Alone (NODA) Program, which will be reincorporated into our patient care services this Fall 2026.

## What is NODA?

NODA is a national volunteer-based program to honor death with dignity by offering a loving presence in one's final hours of life. The program was started by Sandra Clark, RN, in 2001 at PeaceHealth Medical System in Eugene, Oregon. The goal is to provide companionship and support for dying individuals so that no patient dies alone. Compassionate companions will rotate through two-hour shifts until the patient dies. During the shifts, the compassionate companion may speak with the patient, hold his or her hand, or perhaps just be a loving presence at the bedside.

## Who Can Help?

We are seeking interested, caring people from the surrounding communities, current hospital volunteers, and hospital staff members to serve as compassionate companions. There is no clinical caregiving involved. Because of the nature of the program, we ask that our volunteers be older than 18 years of age, and have not experienced a recent death of a family member or friend within the past year.

*Informational meetings and training will begin in September 2026. For more information about this enriching volunteer opportunity, or to register for training, please contact:*

**Cathy Ballenger, UChicago Medicine  
AdventHealth La Grange, 815-351-3903**



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### **How long would I need to commit for a vigil?**

Volunteers are asked to remain at the patient's side for a two-hour vigil shift. Time may vary, depending on your availability.

### **I am an introvert, but I would like to help. Can I be a NODA volunteer?**

Yes, absolutely, just be yourself. The caring presence of another individual is what NODA is all about. We wish all of our patients who are in the final stage of their life's journey to know they have worth and are valued by others. It is most important to be a caring presence at the patient's bedside.

### **If I need to use the restroom, can I leave the room for a minute?**

Of course! It is important to us that you feel comfortable, too.

### **How should I dress to volunteer?**

We ask you to dress in an appropriate manner, one that is respectful to the patient with whom you are sharing vigil. It is also important that you are comfortable during the vigil shift. We request that one's attire be business casual, no denim, no torn material or logos, and closed-toe shoes. We also request that no fragrant perfumes or deodorants be worn.

### **Being a compassionate companion has been a very emotional experience.**

#### **How do I process and deal with it?**

As a NODA volunteer, you are privy to one of the most personal, sacred aspects of an individual's life journey. We understand the significance of a NODA experience. We will encourage ongoing opportunities for all compassionate companions to engage with one another, in an effort to help meet your needs as a volunteer. Gatherings for ongoing dialogues and discussions will be held quarterly, or as needed.



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