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## Signature Hospice Team Grants Patient's Unusual Wish

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PORTLAND, Ore., Aug 25, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Dr. Anthony Ohotto, a physician with Signature Hospice, has written the only known order for a decorative tattoo. "Limited life expectancy is no reason not to do what everyone else can do," said Dr. Ohotto. He wrote the order as a health clearance, a statement that the patient could tolerate the procedure from a medical standpoint.

The Hospice team members at Signature Hospice had noted the physical and emotional decline in their young patient with a neuro muscular disease. They needed to think way outside the box, as nothing seemed to be helping. April Petz, Head Hospice Nurse conferred with Signature Hospice social worker, Maureen Sharp, to brainstorm ideas. They knew that the patient was bothered by an old tattoo that he really wanted to have covered, but had no means physically or financially to deal with it.

April asked her son Nathan Petz, a well known custom tattoo artist, if he would be willing to create a design and donate his time. Nathan was more than willing to help, stating that "I have the time and the ability, and it's a way for him to feel some control over his body."

While the tattoo is scheduled for sometime in the next few weeks, the process is quite complex. Because the tattoo will require about 6 hours, medications must be given and all medical needs covered. The Signature Hospice staff will rotate in shifts, with April Petz, RN and Brad Furst, LPN, covering medical needs. Transport has been covered, and photos of the patient and his current tattoo have been forwarded to Nathan, who is custom designing a number of black panther tattoos that the patient can choose from when he arrives.

This seemingly simple gift has turned this young man's life around. He has begun to smile, talk about it, and for the first time in a long time he has something to look forward to. He has suffered so many losses, and this tattoo has turned his life around. "It's a dignity issue. He feels better about his body," said April Petz.

Founded in 2006, Signature is a for-profit subsidiary of Avamere Health Services, Inc. located in Wilsonville Oregon. In addition to hospice, Signature offers home health and home care services throughout Oregon and Washington. "The work we do boldly enhances the lives of the people we serve," said Trey Malicoat, President of Signature. "We do the little things that make a big difference. Our mission is to provide the best end of life care and comfort possible for our patients and their families. We believe that providing care for a terminally ill patient is a sacred and honored opportunity." There is so much more to helping a patient through the dying process than just medical care. That's what Signature Hospice is about.

SOURCE Signature Hospice

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