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**Four Florida Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations in the Synthase
Collaborative Celebrate Veterans**

Naples, Fla. (Nov. 7, 2022) – Avow, Treasure Coast Hospice, St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care, and Haven Hospice, founding members of Synthase and part of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s We Honor Veterans program, will honor thousands of veterans the week of Veterans Day November 11.

Each not-for-profit Synthase member organization honors veterans by traveling to facilities throughout more than a third of the state for Veterans Day with celebrations and veteran pinning ceremonies. The non-profit group honors more than 2,200 veterans in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Brevard, Collier, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Martin, Nassau, Okeechobee, Putnam, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Suwannee, Union and Volusia counties.

Events recognize veterans who are patients and employees as well as veterans in skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, senior centers, and at home with a commemorative pin and recognition of service.

Each hospice in the organization has been honoring this tradition for years and has accumulated many interesting veteran stories:

- Avow recently honored a 104-year-old veteran who flew several missions where most of his crew did not make it out alive. The 40-year-old organization will also honor its founder, Bruce Hayhoe, a Korean War veteran, with a Veteran Challenge Coin on Veterans Day. Avow's award-winning movie, *Life Lessons Learned in the Military*, which was created with veterans the organization serves, is available to organizations to view.
- St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care has honored a patient who was a veteran of the Women's Auxiliary Royal Air Force. She had family from England and a representative from the Air Force on a Zoom ceremony.
- Treasure Coast Hospice has collaborated with the Stuart Air Show to honor veterans. They were also able to facilitate a once-in-a-lifetime experience for lifelong Mets fan William Bunker, a 92-year-old U.S. Army and Korean War Veteran in their care. He and his music therapist, Caitlin Collin, recorded a rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," which was played on the jumbotron at Clover Park in Port St. Lucie during a St. Lucie Mets game – a joy for him and a forever memory for his family.
- Haven Hospice's We Honor Veterans volunteer William "Mac" McLucas helped recognize the military service of U.S. Navy Chief and patient Carlos Vargas in Middleburg. Carlos' daughter planned to have her wedding in October but moved her ceremony up in hopes that Carlos could attend the wedding before he passed. A group of about a dozen family members and members of the bridal party were there to witness the final salute.

Avow, Treasure Coast Hospice, and St. Francis Reflections are Level 5 Partners with We Honor Veterans, a collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Level 5 Partners are among 3.8% of hospices participating in the program to achieve the highest level,

demonstrating commitment to veteran-centric care. Haven Hospice is currently a Level 4 partner and is working to expand available resources, education, and support in order to achieve Level 5 in the near future.

All provide specialized care to veterans who are facing a terminal illness, including veteran-to-veteran volunteer programs, training on conflict-specific medical and mental health concerns and providing help for veterans navigating VA benefits.

For information about events honoring veterans at each organization, contact:

- Avow: Collier County; Renee Stoll, (239) 261-4404, Renee.stoll@avowcares.org
- Treasure Coast Hospice: Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties; Maryellen Murphy, (772) 801-9572, mmurphy@treasurehealth.org
- St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care Hospice: Brevard County; Mary Larson, (321) 269-4240, mlarson@reflectionsisc.org
- Haven Hospice: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, Union, and Volusia counties; Jeremy Haupt, (352) 271-4655 jphaupt@beyourhaven.org

About Avow

Avow was founded in 1983 as Collier County's original, nonprofit hospice. Today, Avow's nonprofit companies provide palliative care consultations for adults facing chronic or serious illness and hospice care and bereavement support services for children and adults. To learn more about the scope of services provided by Avow, call (239) 261-4404 or visit avowcares.org.

About Synthase Collaborative

Synthase is a not-for-profit collaborative formed in 2021 to unite hospice, palliative care, and post-acute care organizations across Florida. The collaborative will foster the ongoing exemplary care and support provided by each community-based organization through the Synthase statewide network. Synthase member organizations care for an average of 2,200 patients daily and provide care and services to more than 18,000 adults and children annually

across 23 Florida Counties. For more information visit synthase.care or e-mail info@synthase.care.