

HEART-TO-HEART: Caring for the Dying

A series of three, hour-long radio documentaries



As the American population ages and many of us confront the passing of parents and loved ones, we need a more thoughtful public conversation about end of life care. How can we help people live well in the face of death? Can we make the process of dying a meaningful experience free from excessive fear and pain? A new public radio series from veteran producer Claire Schoen raises these questions and explores some of the answers.

HEART-TO-HEART: Caring for the Dying shares personal stories and remarkable moments with people facing death and those who are helping them along the journey. It looks at the care given by doctors, hospitals, clergy, family and friends to people at the end of life. The series examines the barriers to good care that arise from cultural misunderstanding, from fear over the use of morphine, from lack of funding to pay for good programs. Each program provides ideas, examples and inspiration for those who are searching for a good path on the journey to death.

- Program One: *Beyond Pain*, focuses on how fear of addiction and the "War on Drugs" undermine pain management at the end of life.
- Program Two: *Children Sometimes Die*, is about children who die and the support they and their families need during this unbelievably difficult experience.
- Program Three: *Respecting Diversity*, looks at the influence of culture, race and religion on dying; how the assumptions behind "good end-of-life care" do not necessarily match the needs of people who are not white and middle class.

HEART-TO-HEART: Caring for the Dying is compelling, sound-rich radio that brings wisdom, compassion, and common sense to this vitally important dialogue. While the stories are personal, the themes are universal as we all struggle to come to terms with the passing of friends, family members, and ultimately our selves.

The series can be heard on public radio stations across the country starting in October, 2003. It was made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson foundation.