

Atrium Health Floyd Heyman Hospice Care family experiences ‘the biggest kindness’

Hospice teammates’ Christmas Caroling provides poignant moment for patient, family

ROME, GA., Jan. 30, 2026 – They weren’t dressed in Victorian garb or standing in the snow. There was no one-horse open sleigh, and they didn’t travel door-to-door.

This mixture of social, clerical and other hospice workers already had worked a full day before heading out to sing. They traveled in a teal and white van driven by community engagement leader Will Byington, stopping at the homes of patients and their families.

One of those stops was at the DeLano home. Bill DeLano was 95. Until October 2025, he had been able to walk half a mile a day, but a respiratory virus attacked his already compromised lungs. He told his family he wanted to move to hospice care. Daughter Elaine Turner never doubted the decision. The DeLano family, long-time patrons of Harbin Clinic and Atrium Health Floyd, had experienced hospice before with DeLano’s wife.

Hospice intake Coordinator Amy Burgess walked Turner through the process, a kindness she had not anticipated.

“My parents were best friends with her parents,” Turner said. “My parents have known Amy since the day she was born. There is comfort in the relationships that you build. And my dad’s nurse was a friend, not just a nurse.”

The carolers, she said, were an unexpected bonus — the perfect Christmas present at a difficult time.

When “Silent Night” began, DeLano’s eyes flooded with tears as he sang along. It had been his wife’s favorite carol.

“I’m sitting there with tears rolling down my face,” Turner said. “This is my sweet daddy, and they took the time to come. We didn’t have Christmas this year because he was too sick. That was our Christmas. It was wonderful. It was one of the biggest kindnesses we received.”

Caroling for patients is not new for hospice teammates. The tradition started in 1990, the year the hospice program was founded. The practice paused during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social worker Kim Higgins remembers past years when teammates wore silly hats, carried jingle bells and brought along their children to sing. She and Bereavement Coordinator Patsy Wade decided 2025, the 35th anniversary of hospice, was the year to bring back the beloved custom.

Byington said the experience proved fulfilling.

“Watching the joy and excitement of our hospice patients who were in their beds at their homes with family made my heart full of joy,” he said.

DeLano passed away New Year’s Eve.

But, hospice is not about the passing, Turner said.

“A lot of people think hospice is about dying,” Turner said. “It’s not. It’s about living the way you want to and passing with dignity. I can’t sing their praises enough.”

About Atrium Health Floyd

The [Atrium Health Floyd](#) family of health care services is a leading medical provider and economic force in northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd is part of Charlotte, North Carolina based [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States. Atrium Health Floyd strategically combined with Harbin Clinic in 2024 and employs more than 5,200 teammates who provide care in over 40 medical specialties at four facilities: Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center, a 361-bed full-service, acute care hospital and regional referral center in Rome, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center in Cedartown, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Cherokee Medical Center in Centre, Alabama; and Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Behavioral Health, also in Rome. Committed to redefining care for all, Atrium Health Floyd and Harbin Clinic provide primary care, specialty care and urgent care throughout northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd also operates a stand-alone emergency department in Chattooga County, the first such facility to be built from the ground-up in Georgia.

About Atrium Health

[Atrium Health](#) is a nationally recognized leader in shaping health outcomes through innovative research, education and compassionate patient care. Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atrium Health is part of [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States. A recognized leader in experiential medical education and groundbreaking research, [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) is the health system’s academic core. Atrium Health is renowned for its top-ranked pediatric, cancer and heart care, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Atrium Health is also a leading-edge innovator in virtual care and mobile medicine, providing care close to home and in the home. It is ranked nationally among U.S. News & World Report’s Best Hospitals in eight pediatric specialties and for rehabilitation. With a commitment to redefine care for every community it serves, Atrium Health provides nearly \$3 billion in free and uncompensated care and other community benefits.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit, integrated health system in the United States, created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and Atrium Health. Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois; [Atrium Health](#) in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama; and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health services nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Advocate Health is nationally recognized for its expertise in heart and vascular, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs more than 160,000 teammates across 69 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations, and offers one of the nation’s largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to redefining care for all, Advocate Health provides more than \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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