

Transition to Hospice

Sam's Story



For some patients with only a short time to live, Landmark can help maximize the patient's health and well-being, both physically and mentally, and eventually transition to hospice care. Such was the case with Salvatore Persico.

A Life Well-Lived

Salvatore Persico "Sam" was born and lived in Ravena, New York all his life. Sam worked for the former New York Central Railroad for ten years. He later worked for the Lafarge Cement company, and he retired in 2003 after 41 years of service.



Sam and Lynda in 1966

Sam enjoyed playing Texas hold 'em and was an avid New York Yankees and New York Giants fan. His true joy in life was his family: his devoted wife Carol, daughters Lynda and Sandra, his son Sam Jr., his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"Everybody loved my dad," his daughter Lynda Lombardo says of her father. "He was just the cutest, little old Italian man. We miss him."

Making the Most of Life

Landmark began providing services to Sam in August of 2017. Sam had suffered an embolic stroke after a coronary artery bypass grafting in 2010. He had speech difficulties and was weak on his right side, which sometimes caused falls. He was no longer driving, but he went out frequently with his family. In addition to his physical challenges, Sam struggled with anxiety and depression.

Lynda says, "My dad really liked the idea of house calls, especially in the winter, when getting him to a doctor through the cold air was difficult. And later, he was too weak to visit the PCP."

Landmark saw Sam regularly for routine medical and behavioral health visits beginning immediately after their first introductory visit. *(continued)*

Sam's family also felt comfortable calling Landmark for urgent visits to avoid hospital admissions – for example, after a fall and during a severe bloody nose. Lynda says, "The Landmark behavioral health specialist was very helpful and helped get him back on dementia medication." By December of 2017, Sam's mood was reported better after medication. In fact, Sam was now well enough to go on a cruise with his family to Bermuda in the summer of 2018.

Lynda says, "The Landmark doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers and mental health specialists were always really good about explaining things. They were also flexible about appointment scheduling and they would come late in the day so that both my brother and I could both make it to the visit after we finished work."

Sam's Health Care Wishes

By the end of 2018, Sam was admitted to the hospital for aspiration pneumonia, fluid in the lungs and bleeding. There, he underwent a procedure for his heart that required sedation, which can cause complications in people with dementia. When he got home from the hospital, Sam stopped eating. Lynda says, "It was a struggle to get him to eat or drink anything."

Sam's family was told to expect continuing decline and severe memory loss due to Alzheimer's.

By the end of January 2019, Landmark made urgent visits to Sam's home due to more falls and increased confusion. Sam's family requested to discuss hospice, because Sam's decline had accelerated, and he was having multiple falls.

Lynda says, "Landmark helped us as we were making emotional decisions. Our family decided at a certain point we were not going to put him through another surgery. It was an issue of quality of life. We wanted to make sure he's getting the best care. With Landmark, we could call anytime to ask questions. I knew who to call at Landmark."

"When we were first contacted by Landmark, family members, (myself included), were confused as to how Landmark would participate in Daddy's care. So, I said, 'Let's make the appointment with Landmark. What do we have to lose?' We didn't understand until Landmark came to visit that they partner with our health plan to provide these services. Landmark was wonderful for us. Maybe it will work for you, too." – Lynda, caregiver

Lynda says, "My dad wanted to live and die at home. Landmark talked with us about hospice care. I was always under the impression that hospice was just for the last day of life. But Landmark corrected us on what to think about hospice. Landmark explained that hospice can help when there is less than six months to live. When hospice did take over, Landmark told us that if we needed anything, they would still be there for us. It was a good transition from Landmark care to hospice."

Wishes Fulfilled

Sam passed away peacefully in February of 2019 on his 85th birthday with his loving family at his side. Lynda says, "Landmark helped us be able to fulfill my dad's wishes. He was at home and all the kids and grandkids were there when he passed away."

When Lynda looks back on the experience with Landmark, she has only good things to say. "We can't say enough good things about Landmark. They were very comforting. We never felt abandoned."

Lynda adds, "Landmark is loving, caring and supportive. I'm so glad we had Landmark services available to us. Everyone at Landmark was fabulous. I would highly recommend Landmark."



Sam and his daughter, Lynda, in 2016