

HOME HOSPICE

Information for Patients and Families



Hospice care is focused on providing medical, social and emotional support during end-stage illness when life expectancy is anticipated to be six months or less. The focus of hospice care is on comfort and quality of life for the patient, rather than curative treatment. The hospice team works alongside your medical team to ensure a smooth transition. The goal is to help you and your family be successful at home – focusing on the quality of each day.

Here are a few important points to know about hospice care:

- Hospice is usually provided in a person's home with family providing care day to day. If an alternate care location is needed, the hospice team can help with that planning.
- A hospice team includes nurses, social workers, chaplains, volunteers, holistic therapies (pet, music, and art) as well as bereavement support for the family. Hospice care is under the direction of the Hospice Medical Director who participates in your care if your doctor is not available.
- A hospice nurse visits in the home at minimum once a week or more frequently if symptoms require additional visits.
- Home health aide support, when appropriate, is a part of hospice services and includes activities of dressing, bathing, toileting, and supervision. Placement of a home health aide is determined by your insurance and the hospice team after the initial evaluation.
- Home Health Aides provided by hospice or hired from an agency are not able to administer medication or provide medical interventions. The hospice nurse and social worker will help you create a plan that meets your needs.
- Hospice provides you with medications (associated with your hospice diagnosis) and necessary medical equipment (e.g. hospital bed, oxygen, shower chair, or bedside commode) which are all delivered to your home.
- The hospice team is available 24/7 by phone to help with any concerns that come up "after hours" such as pain, nausea, fever, shortness of breath or other symptoms. Your hospice team is your point of contact for all medical concerns and become the "eyes and ears" for your doctor.
- When you enroll on hospice, choose the doctor that you will visit in the office most often and make sure that doctor is identified to hospice as the "attending of record."

If you have any additional questions please speak with your doctor, care manager, or hospice agency. As an additional resource, you can also visit: NHPCO.org