

# HOSPICE SERVICES

## Definition:

Hospice is a program designed to provide comfort care and support for terminally ill patients and their families, creating a compassionate environment and meeting their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Hospice services can be provided at an inpatient facility or in the patient's home (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2015).

## Important Facts About Hospice (USDHHS, 2015):

- ◆ Hospice is a service, not a place. The hospice team will come to you, wherever you are in a private home, a nursing home, or an assisted living facility.
- ◆ Hospice is for people of all ages, not only the elderly.
- ◆ Hospice is for people with all diagnoses. While about 50% of hospice patients have some form of cancer, the other half have a wide variety of illnesses, including heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), dementia (including Alzheimer's), and failure to thrive.
- ◆ Hospice is for families as well as patients. A major part of hospice care is the support and education given to the families and caregivers who are caring for the person with the terminal illness. Education is provided to help family, loved ones, and caregivers understand what is happening and what they can expect moving forward. Hospice also empowers loved ones to provide the care when the team is not present (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization).

A person is qualified for hospice care if they have any condition diagnosed by a physician in which life expectancy is less than six months. However, one can remain under hospice care even if they live longer than six months (Help Guide, 2015).

Hospice care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance companies and includes all medications, medical equipment, and services required to treat the terminal diagnosis. A team of healthcare professionals, social workers, and volunteers are available for care and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You will receive an individualized plan of care, and the hospice team works to coordinate care with all providers. Support services are provided to both patients and families (USDHHS, 2015).

Although terminal illnesses can be very difficult, hospice can help guide the process and provide relief during this emotional time.

## Disclaimer:

*Medline does not practice medicine, and no information presented on this website is medical advice or intended as a substitute for the advice of a physician. All information on this website concerning medical conditions is from publicly available sources.*



## REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2015). Medicare Hospice Benefits. Retrieved July 22, 2015, from <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/02154.pdf>
2. National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (n.d.). Hospice Care. Retrieved July 23, 2015, from <http://www.nhpco.org/hospice>
3. Help Guide (2015). Hospice and Palliative Care. Retrieved July 23, 2015, from <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/caregiving/hospice-and-palliative-care.htm>