

# PATHWAYS HOSPICE CARE FAQ



## WHAT IS HOSPICE CARE?

Hospice care is considered to be the model for quality, compassionate care for people facing a life-limiting illness or injury. Hospice and palliative care involves a team-oriented approach to provide comfort, expert medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support tailored to each patient's needs and wishes. Support is provided to a patient's loved ones as well. At the center of the philosophy of hospice care is the belief that each of us has the right to be pain-free and to live and die with dignity, and that our families are integral to providing support to allow us to do so.

Hospice focuses on comfort, not curing, and in most cases, care is provided in the patient's place of residence. Most care is provided in homes, but we also provide care in skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, hospitals and any place you would call "home." Pathways Hospice services are available to patients of any age, religion, race, or illness.

## HOW DOES HOSPICE CARE WORK?

Typically, a family member serves as the primary caregiver and, when appropriate, helps make decisions for the terminally ill individual. In addition to regular care visits, hospice staff makes visits to assess patient's well being and provides other care or services as needed. Pathways Hospice staff is on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hospice team develops a care plan that meets each patient's individual needs for pain management and symptom control.

### **The Pathways Hospice care team:**

- Patient's personal physician
- Hospice physician (or medical director)
- Nurses
- Home health aides
- Social workers / counselors
- Chaplains
- Music therapists
- Trained volunteers
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapists, as needed

## WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

### **Through the interdisciplinary care team listed above, Pathways Hospice:**

- Manages the patient's pain and symptoms.
- Assists the patient with the emotional, social and spiritual aspects of dying.
- Provides needed drugs, medical supplies, and equipment related to the hospice diagnosis.
- Supports the family on how to care for the patient.
- Delivers special services like speech, physical and music therapy.
- Makes short-term inpatient care available when pain or symptoms become too difficult to manage at home or when caregivers need respite time.
- Provides bereavement care and counseling to family and friends.

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## HOW DOES HOSPICE SERVE PATIENTS AND FAMILIES?

Hospice care is a patient- and family-centered approach that includes, at a minimum, a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, counselors, chaplains and trained volunteers. The team works collaboratively, focusing on patient needs, whether those needs are physical, psychological or spiritual. The team goal is to help keep the patient as comfortable as possible, with loved ones nearby. Medicare and other hospice care recipients may receive these benefits:

- Physician services for the medical direction of the patient's care.
- Regular home visits by registered nurses.
- Certified nurse's aides for personal care services such as dressing and bathing.
- Social work and counseling.
- Spiritual support through hospice chaplains or other clergy.
- Medical equipment such as hospital beds, wheel chairs and walkers.
- Medical supplies such as incontinence and wound care supplies.
- Drugs for symptom control and pain relief.
- Volunteer support to assist patients and loved ones.
- Physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and dietary counseling.

## WHAT ROLE DO VOLUNTEERS PLAY IN HOSPICE CARE?

Pathways Hospice has trained volunteers to aid families and patients. Volunteers provide companionship and support for patients and brief breaks for caregivers. Many volunteers offer their professional services such as massage therapy, financial services, beauty care, energy work and photography. Perhaps the most important skill, however, is their ability to be good listeners.

## WHO QUALIFIES FOR HOSPICE CARE?

Hospice care is for any person with an advanced medical condition and a life expectancy of six months or less if the illness runs its normal course. Although in its first years hospice care served primarily cancer patients, today all life-threatening illnesses and conditions are included in hospice care.