


Hospice Care
It's About How You Live

Beth Mahar, Director of Member Services
Hospice & Palliative Care Association of NYS

Thank you to:
Elizabeth Peters RN
The Community Hospice of Columbia/Greene



Hospice Care

Your father doesn't want to go through chemo again.
Now what?

He wants to watch football.
To finish the Sunday crossword.
To see his granddaughter get married.

Hospice Care from the Visiting Nurse of New York can help him continue
living the life he loves.

Topics

- Philosophy
- Location
- Eligibility
- Services
- Payment
- Bereavement

About Hospice

- Hospice is a program of services, not a place
- Services are provided by an interdisciplinary team under the direction of the patient's primary care physician

Hospice Affirms Life

- Hospice provides support and care for persons in the final stages of life so that they may live in *comfort and dignity*, surrounded by family, friends, and caregivers

"What you don't want to do is put people on the shelf to endure the passage of time. Anything you can do to enrich the quality of a single day is all to the good."

*Robert Milch, MD, FACS
Former Medical Director
Hospice Buffalo*

Comfort Care

- Hospice includes medical care with an emphasis on *pain management* and *symptom relief*
- Hospice teams of professionals and volunteers address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of the *patient & family*

Home Care

- Most medical care for patient comfort can be provided at home
- Services are provided in the home of the patient or caregiver
- The goal is to enable the patient to remain at home in the care of loved ones

Hospital Care

- *Short-term* hospital care is provided in hospitals affiliated with hospice
- Hospital care is for the control of symptoms that temporarily cannot be managed at home and for short-term periods in the final days of life

Nursing Home

- Nursing home residents may elect for hospice care in affiliated nursing homes
- Hospice works collaboratively with nursing home staff to enhance residents quality of life

Adult Home

- Residents of adult group homes may elect for hospice care
- Hospice provides services in an adult home in the same way it provides services in private homes
- Hospice works collaboratively with the staff of the home to enhance the quality of life for the resident

Services

- In order to meet the full range of needs, hospice care is delivered by an interdisciplinary team of professionals & volunteers
- An individualized "plan of care" is developed based on the needs of the patient and family

Interdisciplinary Team

- Medical Director
- Nurse
- Social Worker
- Chaplain
- Home health aide
- Volunteer

Other Services

- Medical Equipment
- Medications
- Supplies
- Complementary Therapies
- Bereavement Counseling
- On-Call Nurse

Counseling: For the Patient

- To cope with illness
- Depression, grief, anxiety
- Spiritual issues
- Loss of meaning, fear of death

Counseling: For the Family

- Caregiver stress
- Role changes
- Depression and anxiety
- Family conflict
- Spiritual concerns
- Grief and bereavement

Caregiver Stress

- Loss of "the way things were"
- Increased responsibilities
- No advance directive
- Socially isolating
- Physical effects of illness & medication

Eligibility

- Hospice services are available to all persons, regardless of race, religion, age, ancestry, citizenship, veteran status, marital status, handicap, sexual preference or ability to pay

Cultural Competency

- Cultural Sensitivity
- Considerations of Communication
- Interpreters
- Role of the Family
- Beliefs regarding death and dying
- Specialized programs
- Access for underserved populations

Diagnosis

- Although most hospice care is provided to cancer patients, hospice is also for patients with HIV/AIDS; advanced respiratory, cardiac, liver and kidney diseases; Alzheimer's disease; Parkinson's disease; Multiple Sclerosis; or Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)

Treatments

- Hospice provides treatments that address *comfort and quality of life*. Controlling pain and other distressing symptoms is a major priority.
- No treatment is specifically ruled out. The decision on the appropriateness of a specific treatment *to address comfort and quality of life* will be made by you, your doctor and Hospice.

Who Pays for Hospice?

- All services are covered by Medicare and Medicaid, as well as by many private insurance companies and HMO's
- No one is refused care because of inability to pay
- Hospice handles the necessary paperwork regarding your hospice insurance reimbursement

Bereavement

- Counseling is offered to all family members during the illness & for about a year after the death
- Hospice offers bereavement support groups which are open to the community
- The hospice bereavement team also works with schools, employers & religious organizations

How to Enroll

- You or your family can begin by calling Hospice directly. The Community Hospice serves the Capital District. Hospice will contact your doctor concerning your medical appropriateness for hospice care.
- Many times, the doctor or hospital discharge planner will contact Hospice after they have discussed it with you.
- You actually become a patient of Hospice by signing a consent form electing hospice care.

When is the "Right Time"?

- If a disease is far enough advanced that curative treatments are being stopped, then it is time to contact hospice.
- A person is considered eligible for hospice care if the physician estimates a life expectancy of six months or less, should the disease run its normal course.

- While a patient must have an expected prognosis of six months or less, hospice care can be provided for six months or longer, depending on the course of the illness. Many people do not understand this and wait unnecessarily before seeking care.

Learn More About Hospice

- Contact your local Hospice office
- Additional information about hospice and palliative care, is available at:
 - The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State, www.hpcanys.org, 518/446-1483; after hours toll-free number 800/431-8988.
 - www.caringinfo.org, or call the NHPCO HelpLine at 1-800-658-8898.
 - American Hospice Foundation www.americanhospice.org

Resources

- National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization www.nhpco.org
