

# What is Hospice?

When medical care cannot offer a cure, hospice provides care, comfort and support for persons with life-limiting conditions as well as their families. The hospice team works to make the person comfortable and relieve their symptoms and pain for the entire length of their illness.

## Who can receive hospice?

To receive hospice, physicians must be willing to state that death can be expected within 6 months if the disease follows its normal course. This does not mean that care will only be provided for 6 months; hospice can be provided as long as the person's physician and hospice team certifies that their condition remains life limiting.

## Who provides these services?

Hospice care is a family-centered team approach that includes, a doctor, nurse, social worker, counselor, chaplain, home health aide and trained volunteers. They work together focusing on the dying person's needs—physical, psychological, social and spiritual. The goal is to help keep the person as pain and symptom-free as possible while offering spiritual and supportive counseling to the patient and family members.

## What specific services are provided as part of hospice?

The hospice team will provide the following services to individuals in the home, wherever they consider home to be:

- ☞ Manage pain and other symptoms
- ☞ Offer support with the emotional and spiritual aspects of dying
- ☞ Provide medications, medical supplies and equipment
- ☞ Teach family members skills to help them provide care
- ☞ Deliver special services like speech and physical therapy if needed
- ☞ Make short-term inpatient care available when pain or other symptoms become too difficult to manage at home
- ☞ Provide support and counseling to family members and loved ones

## Does insurance cover these services?

Hospice is provided regardless of one's ability to pay. Hospice is paid for by the Medicare Hospice Benefit, Medicaid Hospice Benefit and most private insurers.

If a person does not have coverage through Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance, hospice will work with the person and their family to ensure services can be provided. Private insurance coverage varies, but generally includes at least some hospice coverage. Contact your insurance provider to verify your level of coverage for these services.

**For more information or to locate a hospice in your area, contact Caring Connections at:**

[www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) · [caringinfo@nhpco.org](mailto:caringinfo@nhpco.org)

HelpLine 800.658.8898 · Multilingual Line 877.658.8896

*Caring Connections*  
a program of the  
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization