

CHOOSING A HOSPICE

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“Educating the public about end-of-life care”

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What is Hospice?

Hospice is a special way of caring for people facing a life-limiting illness.

Hospice is not a place, but a philosophy. Care is provided wherever the patient calls “home”. This may be in a private residence, assisted living facility or nursing facility. The family or caregiver takes care of the patient with the support from a team of hospice professionals. The care is individualized to meet the goals and needs of each patient and family. The patient or family can contract the hospice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for questions, concerns or emergencies.

There are many different hospice programs in the United States. This brochure is designed to help you and your family make the selection that is best for you.

The goal of the hospice team is to support safe and comfortable dying, effective grieving and self-determination. Hospice does not act to hasten or postpone death.

Each member of the hospice team brings special knowledge and skills to the care of the patient. The physical, emotional, spiritual and practical concerns of the patient and their family are addressed.

Hospice care is a Medicare/Medi-Cal benefit and is covered by many private insurances.

Hospice Team Members

- ✦ Patients and their caregivers.
- ✦ Patient’s personal physician.
- ✦ Hospice Physician.
- ✦ Registered Nurse
- ✦ Social Worker.
- ✦ Spiritual and Bereavement Counselors.
- ✦ Registered Dietitian.
- ✦ Home Health Aide.
- ✦ Volunteer.
- ✦ Other therapists -physical, occupational and speech as needed.

Hospice also provides:

- ✦ Medications needed for comfort and symptom control
- ✦ Medical equipment and supplies necessary for care and treatment.
- ✦ Grief support services as needed for the family in the year following the patient’s death.
- ✦ Short term nursing facility care to provide rest for family caregivers.
- ✦ Short term care in a hospital or nursing facility to control medical symptoms.

Choosing a Hospice

Not all hospice programs are the same. Choosing the right hospice is up to you.

Look for and ask about a hospice program that:

- Is well regarded by your community, doctors, nurses and friends.
- Makes an appointment to explain the hospice program soon after receiving the physician’s order.
- Takes time to explain and answer your questions without pressuring you to make a decision.
- Is able to accommodate cultural, religious and language diversities.
- Schedules visits according to the needs of the patient and family.
- Makes team members available when needed.
- Is committed to attending the death of the patient if desired by the family.
- Makes services available to all who are grieving.
- Does not reject patients based on the potential needs for costly care

To Assure Continued Quality Hospice Care, Look For:

- Satisfactory control of pain and other symptoms.
- Involvement of your personal physician throughout the course of your care.
- Compassionate, caring and competent staff.
- Unhurried pace during visits.
- Staff who listen to patient and family concerns and take action as needed.
- Commitment to providing the same staff throughout the hospice experience.
- Timely deliveries of medical equipment, supplies and medications.
- Prompt response to after-hours calls.
- Continuous education for the family/caregivers about patient care.
- Administrative staff readily available and responsive to your comments or concerns.