

How can hospice be helpful in a long-term care facility?

In addition to the care provided by the nursing facility's staff, the hospice and nursing facility staff work together to anticipate and meet patient and family needs. Here are some examples of the services hospice provides to patients in nursing facilities:

Nursing Services:

- Hospice nurses have specialized training in pain and symptom management, assuring patient comfort through all stages of illness.
- 24 hour on-call availability of a specially trained hospice nurse, for pain and symptom management consultation, as well as thorough plan of care. The nurse can help quickly treat emergent comfort issues, bringing the help TO the resident AT the facility and often avoiding frequent emergency room and/or hospital visits. This can be especially helpful at night when a patient has urgent needs.

Social Work Services:

- The hospice social worker can provide the skilled, time-intensive emotional support that patients and/or families often need.

Nurse Aide Services:

- Additional personal care and TLC is provided by the skilled hospice nurse aide.

Spiritual Support Services:

- Spiritual support through the hospice chaplain is an important part of caring for the whole person. Residents and families may need help making sense of illness, change and loss from a spiritual perspective.

Grief Support Services:

- Comprehensive grief support is available for anticipatory grief and following the death of a loved one. Grief support is available to families for one year following the loss of their loved one.
- Hospice offers special grief support counseling and services to children experiencing a loss, through the Safe Crossings program.

Volunteer Services:

- Hospice volunteers provide friendly visiting and companionship to patients, as well as "Comfort Therapies" (i.e. massage and other complimentary care modalities).

How is hospice paid for?

Providence Hospice of Seattle accepts payment from Medicare, Medicaid, most private insurances and private payment.

- Under Medicare and Medicaid, the services of the hospice team, medications related to the patient's hospice diagnosis, and some medical equipment items are provided under the patient's hospice benefit.
- Under Medicare, the patient cannot be under both "skilled nursing" and hospice services at the same time.
- Under Medicaid, the cost of the patient's "room and board" is also covered. Under Medicare, the patient must provide payment for "room and board" charges (just as Medicare would not pay a person's mortgage or rent fees).
- Services under private health insurance varies, depending on the terms of the patient's policy.
- No one is denied services because of an inability to pay.

How does hospice service get started?

The patient's physician must "order" hospice services. Patients and families can ask the physician about starting hospice services if they have not yet been suggested. Patients and families can also contact Providence Hospice of Seattle directly to inquire about services. Hospice can then contact the physician to request a hospice order.

What if I have questions regarding hospice services?

A hospice representative (nurse or social worker) is available to meet with you to answer questions and talk about your needs and priorities.

In summary...

Hospice services are available to serve patients who are facing a life-limiting illness. Hospice staff provide a continuum of support for both the patient and their loved ones. Hospice care often helps decrease fears and facilitates healing and meaning-making at the end of life.

This information is being distributed by Providence Hospice of Seattle, providers of hospice care for patients of all ages, throughout King County, Washington. For more information, to talk to the hospice admissions nurse, or to request a hospice consultation visit, please call (206) 749-7701.

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