

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Hospice Care

Why do I have to sign consents?

Knowing your rights as a hospice patient is essential if any difficulties arise in the care being provided to you. Being fully informed before any health care is provided is called "informed consent." You cannot reasonably make any decisions about the type of care you desire if you don't know what is available and what all your options are. For this reason, informed consent is a mandatory federal regulation in all health care settings, including hospice.

I heard medications are covered under hospice. Is this true?

Medications for pain and to help control symptoms related to your hospice diagnosis are covered. These medications will be supplied by the hospice staff. Medications you continue to take for other conditions will be your financial responsibility and you will obtain them through your current pharmacy.

Can I still see my regular doctor?

Yes! The hospice staff works closely with you and your doctor to make sure you get the care you need, and establish the Hospice Plan of Care. If your doctor says you need to see a specialist, please discuss this with your Care Team.

What does the Medicare/Medicaid Hospice Benefit cover?

The Medicare/Medicaid Plan has two parts, Hospital Insurance (or Part A) and Medical Insurance or (Part B). Part A covers hospice services and pays nearly all the costs of your hospice care, which can include:

- Intermittent home visits by the Hospice staff,
- Approved medications for symptom control and pain relief,
- Medical equipment (like wheelchairs or walkers) and supplies (like bandages and catheters),
- Short-term respite care in a nursing home,
- Authorized outpatient procedures to alleviate symptoms,
- Approved hospitalizations for symptom management,
- Grief and loss counseling.

The Medicare/Medicaid Hospice Benefit does not cover the following:

- Treatment intended to cure your terminal illness,
- Care from another hospice other than your current hospice provider (Providence Hospice of Seattle),
- Room and board.

Private insurance coverage is often similar. Please contact your insurance company's customer service department for specific information regarding your hospice benefit.

Please see page 5 of your *Patient and Family Guide to Hospice Care* for additional information regarding the hospice benefit and speak with your Care Team if you have additional questions or concerns.

How long can I get hospice care?

You can continue to receive hospice care as long as your doctor certifies that you are terminally ill and probably have six months or less to live. Even if you live longer than six months, you can continue to receive hospice care as long as your doctor recertifies that you are terminally ill.

Hospice care is covered in certification periods. As a hospice patient, you can get hospice care for two 90-day periods followed by an unlimited number of 60-day periods. Your doctor will need to recertify at the beginning of each certification period that you are still appropriate for hospice services. A certification period starts the day you begin receiving hospice care. It ends when your 90- or 60-day period ends.

What is respite care?

Respite care is part of the hospice benefit. It entitles a patient for up to 5 days of respite care (usually in a skilled nursing facility) so the patient's family member or caregiver can rest.

Why does my durable medical equipment need to be switched to a different company?

Providence Hospice of Seattle has contracted with Bellevue Healthcare to supply durable medical equipment to our patients. Bellevue Healthcare provides a wide variety of high quality medical equipment. You do have the choice to retain your current equipment company, but you will be responsible for the cost of your equipment.

What if I want care that hospice doesn't cover?

If you prefer to receive care that is outside of the Hospice Plan of Care (i.e. curative or aggressive treatment), you will need to revoke the hospice benefit and discontinue hospice services. Revocations are effective the date you sign our revocation form. The form must be signed prior to beginning treatment. Please contact your Care Team or our after hours on-call staff at (206) 320-4000 or (888) 782-4446 if you are considering this option.

What if I don't want hospice services anymore?

We hope you want to continue with our services, but if you would prefer to stop hospice care, you will need to revoke the hospice benefit. Revocations are effective the date you sign our revocation form. Please contact your Care Team or our after hours on-call staff at (206) 320-4000 or (888) 782-4446 if you are considering this option.