

Ten Myths about Hospice and Palliative Care

From the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and Providence Hospice of Seattle

Hospice isn't a place. And hospice care is not just about those who are dying. Hospice is a comprehensive type of care that focuses on living—it's about living as fully as possible, surrounded by family and friends, up until the end of life.

Almost one million dying Americans were served by the nation's 3,300 hospices last year reports the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Yet there are many myths about hospice that keep people from getting this compassionate care when they need it most.

MYTH	REALITY
Hospice is where you go when there is nothing more a doctor can do.	Hospice is a philosophy of care providing medical, emotional, and spiritual care focusing on comfort and quality of life.
Good care at the end of life is very expensive.	Medicare beneficiaries pay little or nothing for hospice, and most insurance plans, HMOs and managed care plans include hospice coverage.
Hospice is only for the last few days of life.	Hospice patients and families can receive care for six months or longer, depending upon the course of the illness.
Choosing hospice means giving up all medical treatment.	Hospice places the patient and family at the center of the care-planning process and provides high-quality pain management and symptom control.
Everyone dies in a hospital.	Hospice goes to the patient and family at home—whether that's a private home, a nursing home or assisted living facility, or a hospice residence.
Hospice is only for cancer or AIDS patients.	Fifty percent of hospice patients are diagnosed with conditions other than cancer or AIDS.
Families are not able to care for people with terminal illnesses.	Hospice involves the family and offers professional support and training in caring for their loved ones.
Hospice is just for the elderly.	Hospice serves anyone facing a life-limiting illness, regardless of age.
There's no hospice in my area.	Less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries live in an area where hospice is not available.
Hospice only focuses on the dying process.	Hospice offers grief and bereavement services to family members and the community.

If this information about hospice surprises you, take the time to find out more. The best time to learn about hospice is before someone in your family is facing a health care crisis.

More information is available from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization HelpLine at (800) 658-8898, visit www.caringinfo.org or contact Providence Hospice of Seattle at (206) 749-7701 or visit www.providence.org/hospiceofseattle.