

# **Albemarle Hospice**

## ***Hospice FAQs***

### ***What You Need to Know for Later***

**Where is Hospice?** Hospice is not a place. It is a type of care that helps people who are dying and the people who care about them and for them. It is usually provided in the patient's own home or a home-like setting, yet may also be in a hospital, nursing home or other place where the right support is available.

**Who is Hospice for?** It is for people with terminal illnesses or conditions that will not be cured, who have about six months or less to live. It is also for the family and loved ones of the person who is dying.

**How does Hospice help?** Hospice provides needed medical attention, pain control, spiritual and emotional support, and support for family members, too. Coordinating that is not easy. Hospice provides a team of medical professionals and trained volunteers to help manage medication, equipment and supplies as well as non-medical support such as visiting nurses, spiritual support, insurance payments, home-care needs, etc.

**Who pays for Hospice services?** Most insurance plans, as well as Medicare and Medicaid, pay for Hospice services. When insurance does not pay, or if a person does not have insurance or the financial ability to pay, Hospice care can usually still be provided.

**Why does Hospice exist?** Because the needs of patients and families facing death are very different than those who are working to resolve an illness, and Hospice offers the experience and understanding of what is needed. Because most people say they want to live their final time in the comfort of their own home, as pain-free as possible, in the company of the people who matter most to them. Because patients and their loved ones can learn from Hospice ways to better live in the time remaining. Because people grieving a loss benefit from special kinds of support and comfort.

**Does Hospice take control?** Just the opposite. Hospice keeps patients aware of their options and in full control of decision-making regarding their care. Hospice's role is to help patients with meeting their individual needs.

**Doesn't accepting hospice care mean giving up?** Hospice affirms life. Hospice exists to provide the support and care for persons in the last phases of an incurable disease so that they might live as fully and comfortably as possible. It does not mean giving up hope. The focus of hope shifts toward helping the patient achieve maximum physical comfort and peace of mind.

**How long can we get Hospice care?** Services to the patient generally are available for six months prior to when death is expected. But since no one can accurately predict the date of death, most insurance companies provide flexibility.

**Why is Hospice care usually provided in the home?** Because 9 out of 10 adults say they would prefer to live out their lives peacefully at home, rather than in a hospital or other caregiving place. Hospice usually can make that possible, while making reducing the burden on the patient's family and friend caregivers, allowing their remaining time to be a better quality.

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## *Hospice FAQs cont'd*

**How important is it that I call on Hospice?** If your condition is determined to be terminal, not only you but everyone close to you will experience stress, uncertainty, doubt, worry and confusion. Everyone will experience it in their own way, yet Hospice can help all through this difficult time.

**What kinds of services does Hospice provide?** A Hospice team typically includes the following:

- **Nurses** to visit the patient's home to manage medications, provide injections, monitor the patient's physical health, answer medical questions and teach family members how to care for the one who is dying.
- **Certified Nursing Assistants** and **Home Health Aides** to bathe patients, wash their hair, freshen their linens, tidy-up their rooms, etc.
- **Social Workers** to help patients with their often-changing emotional, medical, financial or spiritual concerns. They also can assist with completing Advance Directives, answering insurance questions, arranging support for caregivers, etc.
- **Spiritual support** provided by the patient's own pastor or rabbi or, if preferred, interfaith clergy provided by Hospice.
- **Trained Volunteers** to keep patients company, to read to them, to shop for necessities, and to give the primary caregivers a break.
- **Bereavement Counselors** to help family members for more than a year after the loved one's death, through support groups, individual counseling and written tips on getting through the grieving process.