



C.A.R.E.S. Corner

Articles are submitted by Benevilla CARES Partners. Our partners have been vetted by CARES staff and are experts in their industry.

Submitted by

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The Truth About Hospice

I've had several friends reach out to me in the past month, asking about hospice care for a loved one. It made me realize that many of us don't really understand how it works—or we have misconceptions about what hospice is and what it definitely is not.

First and foremost, it's meant to be beautiful support for people facing an end-of-life journey. A terminal diagnosis is never easy to cope with, but it's less scary with someone walking alongside you. Our goal is to support both patient and family and help them make the most of the time that's left.

You don't lose your doctor

Hospice is about choice. If you have a doctor you like and trust and want involved in your care, you can have that! Hospice teams work alongside your primary care physician to develop the best plan of care for you. Together we support your goals and desires – it's YOUR journey. Don't worry about cost.

Medicare Part A covers hospice care, medical equipment and medications needed to treat your illness. If you're too young for Medicare, most insurance plans cover hospice. And if you don't have insurance —not-for-profit Hospice of the Valley will care for you regardless of ability to pay. We turn no one away-- that's been our mission for 42 years -- an important distinction from for-profit hospices.

Hospice care comes to you

Our care teams come to you, wherever you live to deliver hospice care. We are unique in that we also have 10 inpatient hospice homes, which are used to help with short-term symptom management or provide family members a break from the stress of caregiving.

You are free to change your mind

You're always free to leave hospice care to pursue additional treatments or try a new therapy. There is no rule requiring you to stay on hospice. Patients come on... and sign off whenever they choose—it's their decision. Your hospice benefit is waiting for you, whenever you need it again.

All hospices are not the same

Hospices vary in their level of experience and expertise. Medicare allows you to choose your own hospice, but if you don't make a choice... someone- a hospital, a doctor, a facility will choose for you. Fortunately, if you're ever dissatisfied with a hospice, all it takes is a phone call to change to another.

Hospice does not hasten death

Hospice care is about controlling pain and keeping patients comfortable, NOT hurrying death. Our mission is to enhance every moment you have left.

Often when patients stop curative treatment and start receiving hospice care, something amazing happens. The social support and nursing care stabilize their condition and quality of life actually improves! Multiple studies show that receiving hospice sooner in the disease process can often extend life. Imagine coming on hospice to live longer!

Families feel supported too-- with education and counseling. Many tell us later, that had they known how wonderful the care was, they would have chosen hospice care sooner.

There's no crystal ball when it comes to deciding exactly when to choose hospice, but once you do—be assured that the focus is on giving you back some control on this difficult journey -- and maximizing comfort and dignity in your life.