

Ten Facts About Hospice Care You May Not Know

Some people mistakenly think hospice care is just about dying...that hospice is the place you call when there's nothing more that can be done. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hospice helps patients and families focus on living.

Hospice care brings comfort, dignity, and peace to help people with a life-limiting illness live every moment of life to the fullest. It also reaches out to provide support for the family and friends who love and care for them.



Last year, 1.45 million dying Americans were served by the nation's hospice providers. Yet, there are some important facts about hospice that people don't know. And this may be keeping people from getting the best care possible, when they need it most.

1. Hospice is not a place. It's high-quality medical care that helps the patient and family caregivers focus on comfort and quality of life.
2. Hospice is paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, most insurance plans, HMOs, and managed care plans. Fear of costs should never prevent a person from accessing hospice care.
3. Hospice serves anyone with a life-limiting illness, regardless of age or type of illness.
4. Hospice serves people of all backgrounds and traditions, reflecting the following core values: allowing the patient to be with family, including spiritual and emotional support, treating pain, and cutting across all cultures.
5. Research has shown that the majority of Americans would prefer to be at home at the end of life's journey. Hospice makes this possible for most people.
6. Hospice also serves people living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
7. Hospice patients and families can receive care for six months or longer.
8. A person may keep his or her referring physician involved while receiving hospice care.
9. Hospice offers grief and bereavement services to family members and the community.
10. To get the most out of what hospice offers, it's better to have the care for more than just a few days.

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 healthcare crisis.

For more information, contact your nearest *Hospice Care of the Southwest* location, look on-line at www.caringinfo.org or call the HelpLine at 800-658-8898.

This information is provided by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and *Hospice Care of the Southwest* (www.hospicesouthwest.com).