

How to Select a Hospice Provider



Determining which hospice provider is right for you and your loved one may best be learned from interviewing different hospices and talking to those you trust and who are familiar with hospice programs in your area.

The following is a list of questions to help you select the hospice program best able to meet your needs:

Your Needs and Wishes

- How does the hospice staff work with me and my loved one to honor my wishes?

Family Involvement and Support

- Are family caregivers given the information and training they need to care for me at home?
- What services does the hospice offer to help me and my loved ones deal with grief and loss?
- Is respite care (relief for the caregiver) and inpatient care available?
- Will the hospice staff tell me and my loved ones what to expect in the dying process?
- What bereavement services are available to my family after the death of a loved one?

The Role of the Physician

- What is the role of my or my loved one's physician once hospice care begins?
- How will the hospice physician oversee my care and work with my doctor?

Staffing

- How many patients at any one time are assigned to each hospice staff member?

Volunteers

- What services do volunteers offer?
- What screening and type of training do hospice volunteers receive before they are placed with a patient family?

Comfort and Pain Management

- Does the hospice staff regularly discuss and routinely evaluate pain control and symptom management with me and my family?
- Does the hospice staff respond immediately to requests for additional pain medication?
- What specialty or expanded programs does the hospice offer?
- How does the hospice meet my and my family's spiritual and emotional needs?

After-Hours Care

- How quickly does the hospice respond to after-hours emergencies?
- How are calls and visits handled when death occurs?
- Are other services, such as a chaplain or a social worker, available to me or my loved ones after-hours?

Nursing Home and Other Residential Settings

- How does the hospice provide services for residents in different care settings?

Hospitals and Other Inpatient Settings

- How does the hospice work with hospitals and other facilities during the course of my stay?
- What will happen if care cannot be managed at home?

Quality

- What measures does the hospice use to ensure quality?
- Does the hospice program follow the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's *Standard of Practice for Hospice Programs*?
- Do hospice professionals have special credentials in their areas?

Survey and Inspection

- Is the hospice program certified, licensed, and reviewed by the state (if applicable) or the Federal Government?
- What other kinds of accreditation or certification does the hospice program or its staff have?

Paying for Hospice Care

- Are all the costs of hospice care covered by my health insurance?
- What services will I have to pay for out-of-pocket?
- Are any services provided at no charges?

Information proved by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

