



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at The Reschini Group



MAKING THE HOSPICE CHOICE

Hospice is a special concept of care offering support and medical assistance for a person suffering from a terminal illness. Hospice focuses on treating the person rather than the disease, ensuring that patients live their remaining time in comfort and with dignity.

Who Provides Hospice Care?

Hospice care depends on the patient's choice and circumstances. Most often, hospice care is a service provided in the home, but hospitals, nursing homes, and private facilities may also offer specialized programs.

Providing hospice care is typically a team approach that focuses on a patient's medical care, pain management, and emotional support. The patient, family caregivers, and a doctor are the core of the hospice team, and together they develop a personalized plan aimed at relieving symptoms.

When to Consider Hospice Care

Hospice care is appropriate when a person has a terminal illness and life expectancy is no longer than six months.

Who Pays for Hospice Care?

Hospice care is generally covered by most private insurance plans, Medicare, or Medicaid. To help you determine possible out-of-pocket expenses, the hospice care provider should be able to advise you on what costs, if any, are the patient's responsibility.

How to Select a Hospice Program

The following questions can help you select a hospice program based on your needs:

- Are family caregivers given the information and training they need to care for the patient at home?

- What services does the hospice offer to help the patient and loved ones deal with grief and loss?
- Is respite care (relief for the caregiver), including inpatient, available?
- How will the hospice physician oversee the patient's care and work with the patient's doctor?
- How many patients are assigned to each hospice staff member?
- Does the hospice staff regularly discuss and routinely evaluate pain control with patients and families?
- How quickly does the hospice respond to after-hour emergencies, and who responds?
- How are calls and visits handled when death occurs?
- How does the hospice work with hospitals and other facilities during the course of the patient's stay?
- Does the hospice program follow the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's "Standards of Practice for Hospice Programs"?
- What other kind of accreditation or certification does the hospice program or its staff have?