
Hospice Care in a Nursing Home

Hospice staff can complement the nursing home staff to provide advanced illness care focusing on physical, social, emotional, and spiritual support. Hospice can improve comfort to the resident, provide emotional support to the family, and work with the nursing staff to maintain the quality of life for the resident while in the nursing home. Hospice care can be provided in a nursing home as this is the home of the resident. The hospice team works together with the resident and family along with the nursing home staff to assure resident and family's goals are met. Hospice enables the resident to live to the fullest extent possible, with purpose, dignity, grace, and support. Hospice operates as a team. The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) becomes very important to resident, family, and nursing home staff to support end of life care. Members of the hospice team are professionals specializing in the care of persons with advanced illness. The hospice team includes: resident, resident's family, registered nurses (RN), licensed practical/vocational nurses (LPN/LVN's), doctors, advanced practice nurses, chaplains, social workers (SW), nursing assistants (NA), volunteers, and bereavement counselors.

What services can hospice provide?

Services and benefits include:

- Facilitate discussion of advanced care planning to meet patient and family goals and desires
- Focus on pain and symptom management
- Recognize changes in signs/symptoms of end-stage terminal illness
- Improve family comfort with hospice care
- Assist with communication with the facility staff to resident/family
- Reduce necessity of hospitalization and allow the resident to stay in the nursing home
- Provide education and support to family members
- Educate and support family members on the care and process of the condition of the patient
- Support care from trained volunteers
- Follow-up bereavement services
- On-call hospice staff 24/7 available for consultation

How is hospice paid for?

Hospice is paid for through the Medicare Hospice Benefit, or Medicaid Hospice Benefit, or most private insurers. The hospice benefit pays for services of the hospice team, medicines, equipment, and supplies relating to the life-limiting illness. Hospice is allowed to charge a 5% administration fee on all medications. For detailed information of financial responsibilities including room and board and other potential charges speak with a member of your healthcare team and/or your insurance provider.

Additional information on Medicare hospice benefits – www.medicare.gov

Summary:

Hospice services are provided wherever the person lives, whether in their own home, in a family member's home or in a nursing home. The hospice team works with the nursing home staff to provide quality care, manage pain and distressing symptoms, and provide social, emotional, and spiritual support.

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets on are available at www.HPNA.org.

Reference

Core Curriculum for the Generalist Hospice and Palliative Nurse. 3rd Ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; 2010.

National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care. Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care. Brooklyn, NY. 2009.

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) Hospice Care in Nursing Facilities: An Educational Resource for Effective Partnerships in End-of-Life Care. Module 2. 2001.

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