



## Hospice care timeline

# Understanding the benefits of earlier admission

## Earlier referral allows more opportunity to provide meaningful and comprehensive care.

Hospice care is increasingly evidence-based with remarkably improved palliative care and symptom management outcomes. The benefit of hospice care is greatest when patients receive services early enough within their eligibility to:

- Maintain independence and take control of their illness or disease
- Complete important tasks
- Organize their personal affairs
- Complete spiritual services
- Say goodbye to loved ones

Nearly all patients who elect it may receive hospice care once their doctor and hospice physician certify that they most likely have six months or less to live. When pain and other symptoms are effectively controlled, people not only feel better; they also have the potential to live a better and more meaningful life.

## Not all hospice agencies are the same

We are your hospice resource and can help lead the conversation with your patients. Let us help you help your patients take control of their lives and their disease while assisting them in maintaining independence and living life on their own terms.

## We can provide education on the benefits of hospice care.

When a physician recommends hospice, patients are more likely to choose it. To refer to us, simply call or fax the patient information. We will visit the patient, perform an evaluation, and if the patient is eligible, we begin care.

The following columns illustrate how a patient admitted with a likely prognosis of months can achieve greater benefits with supportive relationships and improved care compared to someone admitted with a prognosis of only weeks or days, when there is insufficient time to do more than just manage just immediate care needs.

Months	Weeks	Days
<b>Refer to hospice to help address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained, ongoing weight loss</li> <li>• Altered mental status</li> <li>• Skin breakdown</li> <li>• Frequent medication changes</li> <li>• Increasing weakness</li> <li>• Frequent falls</li> <li>• Recurrent infections</li> <li>• Worsening shortness of breath</li> <li>• Decline in ability to provide self care</li> <li>• Increasing lethargy</li> </ul>	<b>Refer to hospice to help address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent medication dosing changes</li> <li>• Worsening or unrelieved pain and other symptoms</li> <li>• Greater assistance needed with ADLs</li> <li>• Loss of desire for regular activities</li> <li>• Reduction in appetite</li> <li>• Increased phone calls to physician</li> </ul>	<b>Refer to hospice to help address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple ER visits</li> <li>• Anxiety related to the discontinuation of curative treatments</li> <li>• Out-of-control pain and symptoms</li> <li>• Multiple phone calls to physician</li> <li>• Unscheduled physician visits</li> <li>• Patient and family exhaustion</li> </ul>
<b>Having months with hospice care will help the patient and/or caregivers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a higher quality of life</li> <li>• Cope with the emotional stresses of a life-limiting illness</li> <li>• Be an active participant in the plan of care and manage difficult decisions</li> <li>• Understand and anticipate physical, emotional and spiritual changes and needs toward the end of life</li> <li>• Organize personal affairs</li> <li>• Make wishes known to loved ones</li> <li>• Resolve “unfinished business,” say goodbye to loved ones or leave a legacy for family members</li> <li>• Address increasing lethargy</li> </ul>	<b>Having weeks with hospice care will help the patient and/or caregivers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage pain and symptoms</li> <li>• Understand physiological changes and what to expect</li> <li>• Help patient and family anticipate next steps</li> <li>• Experience less caregiver fatigue</li> <li>• Cope with anticipatory grief</li> <li>• Reduce ER and hospital admissions</li> <li>• Make funeral arrangements</li> </ul>	<b>Having days with hospice care will help the patient and/or caregivers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage pain and symptoms</li> <li>• Control agitation, anxiety or restlessness</li> <li>• Provide caregiving interventions</li> </ul>



**For more information:**

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