

Frequently Asked Questions about Hospice Care

What is Hospice?

Hospice is a special type of care for those dealing with the daily realities of living with a life-limiting illness. A team of skilled health care professionals and trained volunteers provides hospice care. The team at Mary Washington Hospice includes:

- Physicians
- Skilled Nurses
- Medical Social Workers
- Therapists
- Home Health Aides
- Spiritual Counselors
- Grief Counselors

How can Hospice help?

Hospice combines the efforts of all team members to provide the patient and their family:

- Specialty pain and symptom management
- Practical, emotional and spiritual support
- Arrangements for hospice related medical equipment and supplies
- 24 hour on-call response by a nurse
- Hospice neither hastens nor prolongs death.

Who can receive Hospice care?

Hospice care is designed to meet the individual needs of those whose life expectancy is measured in months rather than years. Hospice patients often have medical conditions that include, but are not limited to:

- Cancer
- AIDS
- Lung disease
- Heart Disease
- Stroke/Coma
- Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease
- Liver Disease
- Renal Disease

How is Hospice care funded?

Most insurance companies, including Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE cover Hospice care. Arrangements are made to bill the patient's insurance company directly. Most importantly, Mary Washington Hospice never refuses a patient despite their insurance status or inability to pay. Additionally, the cost of providing quality care exceeds reimbursements from insurances; therefore, generous donations assist us in providing hospice services to patients as well as to provide some patients with basic needs.

When do services begin?

Hospice care starts with a phone call to Mary Washington Hospice. A Hospice nurse will contact the patient's physician and arrange to meet with the patient and family to discuss care. Hospice care is most beneficial to patients and their caregivers when services start as soon as a patient is given information that a disease has reached the point when care is no longer aimed at a cure and comfort is the goal.

Where is care provided?

Services are provided at the patient's place of residence. This can be in their own home, the home of a friend or relative, an adult home, a nursing home or other residential facility. Contact Mary Washington Hospice for information regarding local nursing homes that have contracts to allow for hospice services.

Can I change my mind about Hospice?

Yes – Patients and families choose to participate in the hospice program during the course of a life-limiting illness. Should a patient or family decide they no longer wish to continue Hospice services, the Hospice staff will assist patient/family with making necessary arrangements for appropriate medical care.