

Understanding Hospice and Palliative Care

Hospice and palliative care both focus on improving the quality of life for patients with chronic or serious illnesses. Both are focused on comfort and symptom management, yet there are some key differences.

The Continuum of Care



When to Refer

Palliative care can be provided at any stage of a serious illness, not just at the end of life. It focuses on relieving symptoms and improving the quality of life for patients, regardless of prognosis. ***Patients receiving palliative care may continue to receive curative treatments for their underlying illness.***

Hospice care is provided to patients ***who have a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less to live if the disease runs its normal course.*** The primary goal of hospice care is to provide comfort and support to patients and their families during the end-of-life period.

Services Provided

Palliative Care offers services focused on pain and symptom management and assistance in navigating the health care system to assist patient in meeting their needs.

Hospice Care is much more comprehensive than a palliative care program. These services include pain management, symptom control, assistance with decision-making, emotional and spiritual and emotional support with coordination of care by a team of end-of-life specialists including RNs (scheduled and on call 24 hr/day), Aides, SWs, Chaplains and Volunteers, all directed by a Physician.

Location of Services

Palliative care can be provided in various settings, including hospitals, outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities, and sometimes in the patient's home.

Hospice care is often provided in the patient's home but can also be offered in hospice facilities, nursing homes, or hospitals, depending on the patient's needs and preferences.

Payment of Services

Palliative care services may be covered by insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid, but coverage can vary depending on the specific services offered and the setting in which they are provided.

Hospice care is typically covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans when patients meet eligibility criteria.