

# Benefits of Hospice

**One of the greatest benefits of hospice is its philosophy of care, which focuses on the whole person, and *not* his or her disease or condition.**

## **Hospice offers a inter-disciplinary team approach**

What that means is there are many different professionals that provide care to each individual on hospice care. The team usually consists of specialists such as doctors, physical therapists, social workers, clergy, nurses and volunteers.

Team members provide a coordinated care approach and respect the desires and wishes and ideas of the patient and family members as the end of life approaches. The patient's home is the most frequent setting. However, hospice can be provided in a long term care community as well. Either way, care is centralized and coordinated by the team.

## **Round-the-clock availability**

You have access to hospice nurses and physicians 24/7 to assist with your needs, concerns and questions. Hospice provides ongoing support as you feel you need.

## **Patient Choice and Control**

One of the greatest fears of terminally ill patients is that of losing control over what happens to them. Utilizing a hospice program allows the patient and family members to voice concerns and become involved in treatment and logistical options.

Most hospice programs include family conferences typically led by a hospice nurse or social worker. Frequent updates and the opportunity to make choices are a major benefit to hospice care because they relieve huge amounts of stress.

## **Respite care**

A hospice recipient's primary caregiver is usually a family member or friend. Hospice nurses train caregivers with the essential aspects of hands-on care. There may come a time, however, when the caregiver will need to care for themselves and take a break. Respite care is available so that the primary caregiver is able to get rest, relax and refresh themselves.

**Volunteer Services**

Hospice volunteers are an essential part of the hospice team. Individuals enrolled in hospice have access to these volunteers who are trained in all aspects of hospice care. They provide brief periods of respite to caregivers, offer companionship to patients, do light housework, take part in bereavement calls or help at the hospice office.

**Bereavement counseling**

Hospice offers bereavement services for survivors as they go through the process of grieving. Trained volunteers, clergy and professional counselors stay connected via telephone and/or letters. The team also provides referrals as necessary for medical and professional care. Bereavement services continue for a 13-month period after the loss.