

A Physicians Guide To Hospice

Having crucial conversations with your patients about hospice care can be difficult at best. These conversations can be made easier when one comes from a perspective of hope. **Yes, hope.**

Hospice is Hope:

- Hope for a “good” death at home for your patient, surrounded by family and friends.
- Hope for expert care in pain and symptom management.
- Hope for Spiritual support at a time when it is needed most.
- Hope for a reduced financial burden of treatments that no longer work.
- Hope for the best quality of life for whatever time they have remaining.
- Hope for family support when your patient dies.

Year after year, new studies produce the same results: Patients wait for their doctors to suggest hospice, and doctors wait for their patients to do the same. Most patients who receive an early referral to hospice are grateful for their experience. Patients will often experience reduced anxiety if they know they have your support in being referred to hospice.

Transition to hospice care:

If you would not be surprised if your patient would die within the next 6 month to a year, it's time to have a conversation about the efficacy of current treatment or the unpredictability of their particular disease decline and the benefits of Palliative Care and/or hospice.

- State that current treatments are no longer helping in curative or life prolonging measures creates an excellent segue to talk about the benefits of getting hospice involved early.
- Suggest an informational visit by a hospice representative so they can get their specific questions answered.

Benefits of hospice:

- Hospice provides comprehensive care through a interdisciplinary team that includes: hospice physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice aides, and volunteers with access 24/7.
- Hospice provides an individualized number of home visits per patient as necessary
- Hospice care is covered 100% by Medicare and most private insurance programs.
- Hospice staff helps to ease the way of caregivers, by teaching them how to administer medications, operate equipment and coordinate services.
- Hospice volunteers offer much needed breaks for caregivers
- Hospice has bereavement programs for the patient's family a full 13-months post death

*If you are uncertain as to whether your patient may be appropriate for a hospice referral, please call us to discuss the particular situation. We can also have a hospice representative meet with the family for an informational visit. **Thank you for the trust you place in us in the care of your patients.***

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