



making moments matter

Hospice Care Guide

Revised May 2020



What is hospice care?

Hospice is not a place; it's an approach to care for terminally ill patients of all ages. It can be provided in a hospital, nursing home, hospice residence, patient's home or any place a patient might live.

The philosophy behind hospice care is the premise that everyone has a right to die with dignity, in as much comfort as possible, as alert as possible, and with an opportunity for personal growth and the healing of relationships. Hospice is a holistic approach to caring for the whole patient – physically, emotionally and spiritually. It turns away from aggressive medical measures designed to prolong life when those procedures have become invasive and no longer productive.



Since care is centered on enhancing quality of life while there is still time, hospice is really all about living.

AseraCare Hospice® is one of the nation's premier providers of hospice and chronic disease management services. We treat each patient's end-of-life journey with respect, kindness, compassion and support. Our family-centered approach helps ensure that the needs and wishes of both the patient and his or her family are met.

The decision for hospice care can be a difficult one to make, and we understand that patients and families have questions. We hope the following information will help clarify the benefits of hospice care, and provide reassurance as you and your family make the decision for hospice.

Who is part of the hospice team?

The hospice team is comprised of a doctor, nurses, hospice aides, a social worker, a bereavement coordinator, a spiritual care coordinator and volunteers.

A patient's hospice team is in constant contact with the patient, the family and each other, and collaborates on how to best meet the needs of both patient and family. The hospice team also works closely with the patient's own physician.



Since the team is trained in end-of-life care, they are able to help the patient and family understand the dying process, and what to anticipate both physically and emotionally. The goal of the hospice team is to provide as much comfort as possible to the patient and family during the patient's remaining time.



Is the hospice team (physicians, nurses, social workers) certified or credentialed in hospice care?

There are several credentials that hospice professionals can achieve based on their knowledge of hospice care and their educational experience.

Will the hospice team be readily available – even at night and on the weekends?

The hospice team is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

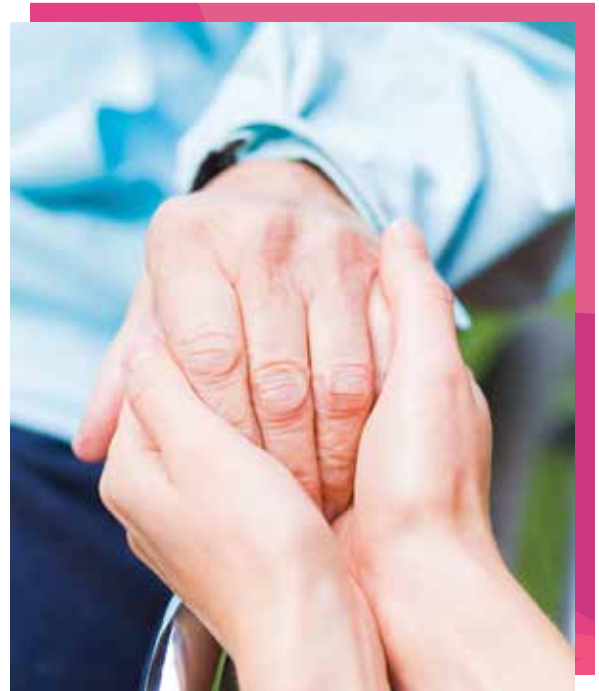
How do I pay for hospice care?

Depending on the supplies and services needed, all or part of hospice care may be covered by Medicare, Medicaid (in some states) or private insurance. Hospice services can be paid for completely as long as the services relate to managing the terminal illness, controlling pain, or helping you or your loved one maintain daily activities.

Medicare and Medicaid may pay 100% of the costs when a Medicare-eligible patient receives care from an approved hospice. Under Medicare law, no person can be refused hospice care due to inability to pay.

What happens if I need to go to the hospital or nursing home – will hospice continue to provide care?

If you have a preferred hospital or know you may need to go to a nursing home, it's important to find out from the hospice provider which ones they are contracted to serve so that they may continue your hospice care.



What screening and training do hospice volunteers receive?

All hospice volunteers must receive specialized training on hospice care before they spend time with patients and families.

Additional interview questions for the hospice provider:

- How is the patient's pain managed?
- How does the hospice staff communicate with family?
- How many times a week should I expect the hospice RN case manager and hospice aide to visit?
- Is the hospice agency just specialized in hospice or can they provide home health?
- What can your volunteers do for my loved one?
- What is the process if medications need to be changed?
- What if I don't understand what is happening and don't know how to make the right decisions?

Additional Resources

As a unique guide to coping with life-limiting illness, *The Journey Home, Stories of Compassion and Inspiration* from AseraCare Hospice is a book that provides a resource for patients, families and physicians who struggle with how and when to discuss the hospice option. This book is available electronically as a PDF document on AseraCare Hospice's website, www.AseraCare.com. It is also available for download on Amazon.

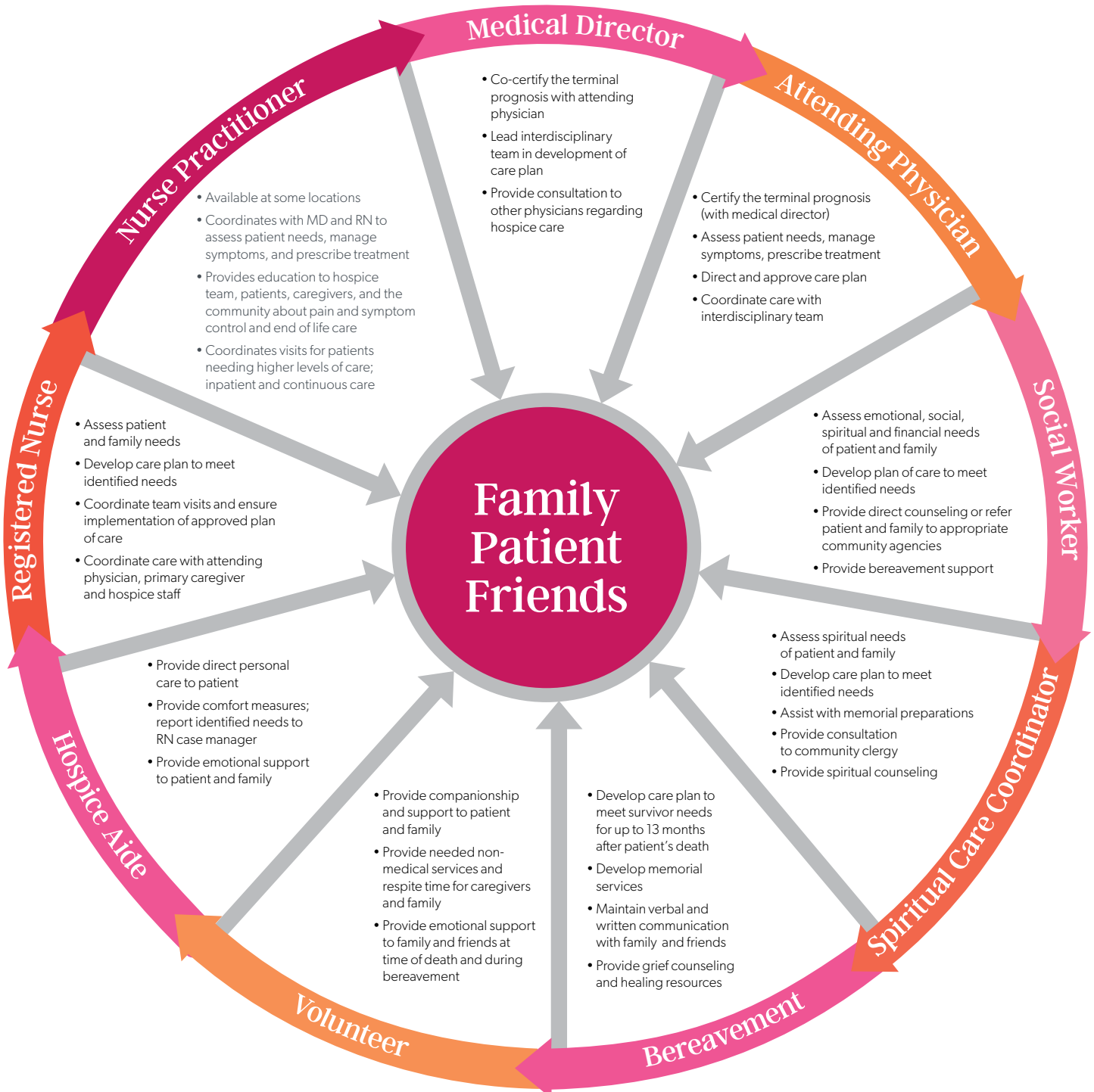
The book was authored by K.T. Anders and John Ross, and published by AseraCare Hospice. It offers a firsthand look at the benefits of hospice through more than 60 personal accounts of AseraCare Hospice patients. The book guides physicians, caregivers, patients and family members through the decision-making process, the roles of the care team and bereavement.

Hospice Videos

AseraCare Hospice has created a collection of videos that address many common hospice questions. To view these videos and others, visit the AseraCare Hospice YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/AseraCareHospice.

The Hospice Care Team

The Hospice Care Team depicts the holistic continuum of care rendered by hospice field and office professionals and trained volunteers working together as a team to assess and meet the patient's and family's unique needs as the end of life draws near.





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