Hospice Information & Contacts, NCI

Hospice is care that involves health professionals and volunteers. They provide medical, psychological, and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their loved ones. The common example of terminal illnesses treated by hospice is cancer, but it can also be COPD, heart failure, and end-stage liver disease. Hospice stresses quality of life. This includes peace, comfort, and dignity. The goal of hospice is to control pain and other symptoms. This helps the patient remain as alert and as comfortable as possible. Hospice services are available to persons who can no longer benefit from treatment. The typical hospice patient has a life expectancy of 6 months or less. Hospice programs provide services in the home, hospice centers, hospitals, or skilled nursing facilities. Patients' families are an important part of hospice care. Services are designed to provide them with the assistance and the support they need.

HOSPICE CARE AND INFORMATION:

The **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)** is an association of programs providing hospice and palliative care. It is designed to increase awareness about hospice services. They also defend the rights and issues of terminally ill patients and their family. They offer publications and discussion groups. They also give information on how to find a hospice and about the financial aspects of hospice. Some Spanish-language publications are available. Staff members are able to answer calls in Spanish.

Address:
1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 625
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone: 703-837-1500
1-800-658-8898 (Helpline)
E-mail: info@nhpco.org
Web site: http://www.nhpco.org

The **Hospice Association of America (HAA)** can provide facts and statistics about hospice programs. They supply the publication "Information about Hospice: A Consumer's Guide." This guide offers information about the advantages and financial aspects of hospice. This guide also offers information on how to select quality hospice care that is best for a patient's needs. It also lists state resources available to patients.

Address: 228 Seventh Street, SE.
Washington, DC 20003

Telephone: 202-546-4759
Web site: http://www.nahc.org/HAA/home.html

The **Hospice Education Institute** offers information and referrals on various hospice programs around the country. They provide seminars on hospice care throughout the United States. Comments or suggestions about hospice programs are also welcomed from health professionals and hospice volunteers.

Address: 190 Westbrook Road
Essex, CT 06426-1510

Telephone: 860-767-1620
1-800-331-1620
E-mail: HOSPICEALL@aol.com
Web site: http://www.hospiceworld.org

The **American Cancer Society (ACS)** offers a variety of services to hospice patients and their families. The ACS has free fact sheets and publications about hospice. Call their telephone number for the address of a local ACS chapter.

Telephone: 1-800-ACS-2345
Web site: http://www.cancer.org

Hospice Net is an organization that works only through the Internet. It contains more than one hundred articles about end-of-life issues. It is dedicated to providing information and support to patients, families, and friends facing life-threatening illnesses.

E-mail: questions@hospicenet.org
Web site: http://www.hospicenet.org

Some hospice expenses are paid by health insurance plans. The medical costs covered by a policy are available from an employer's personnel office, a hospital, a hospice social worker, or an insurance company. Medical costs that are not covered by insurance are sometimes tax deductible.

Medicare is a health insurance program for the elderly or disabled. It is directed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the Federal Government. It provides payment for hospice care. When a patient receives services from a Medicare-certified hospice, Medicare hospital insurance pays almost the entire cost including medications. For information about the location of Medicare-certified hospice programs, people can call their state health department. You will find the telephone number in the state government section of a local telephone directory. The Medicare Hotline can answer general questions about Medicare benefits and coverage. It can also refer people to their regional home health contacts for information about Medicare-certified hospice programs. The toll-free telephone number is 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Deaf and hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment may call 1-877-486-2048. Medicare information can also be found on the Internet at http://www.medicare.gov.

Medicaid is a federal program that is part of CMS. It is directed by each state. It is designed for patients who need financial assistance for medical expenses. Information about coverage is available from local state welfare offices, state public health departments, state social services agencies, or the state Medicaid office. Information about specific state locations may also be found at http://cms.hhs.gov/medicaid.

Local civic, charitable, or religious organizations may also be able to help patients and their families with hospice expenses.

SOURCES OF NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE INFORMATION:

Cancer Information Service
Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1-800-332-8615

Internet: http://www.cancer.gov to reach NCI's Web site.
Live Help: Cancer Information Specialists offer online assistance through the Live Help link on the NCI's Web site.

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