



Myths vs. Facts about Hospice Care

There are many **opinions** about what Hospice is and isn't. To learn the **facts** about the patient-centered care Hospice provides to seriously ill people, please read below.

Hospice clinicians are specially trained experts in pain control and symptom management. Our team of physicians, nurses, medical social workers, aides and volunteers craft an individualized plan of care for each patient based on that patient and family's wishes for end of life care.

As the hope for recovery becomes the hope for a life ending in comfort and dignity, Hospice helps each patient live life with a sense of personal worth in the time remaining to them.

MYTH

FACT

Hospice is only for the last few days or weeks

Hospice care is for people in the last stages of life, not just for people who are on the verge of death. To be eligible for Hospice services, a patient must have a prognosis of six months or less to live. However, Hospice services provide more benefit to patients and families when they enroll earlier rather than in the final days or weeks of life.

Hospice is expensive

Hospice care is paid for by Medicare, Medi-Cal and private insurance. For patients with no insurance there is a sliding scale. Once enrolled in Hospice, all patients and families receive the same services including medications and equipment related to the terminal diagnosis and the care from a team of professionals.

A doctor has to make a referral to Hospice

Anyone can request a no-cost, no-obligation evaluation or information visit from Hospice, whether the patient resides in a private home or a care facility.

Hospice is only for people with cancer

Hospice is no longer exclusively for cancer patients. Hospice care is available to all terminally ill people and their families, regardless of diagnosis. Some of the most common non-cancer diagnoses and life-limiting conditions are congestive heart failure, dementia, chronic lung disease, or "debility," which is simply old age.

Hospice patients cannot see their own doctors

Patients receiving Hospice services may continue to be cared for by their own doctor.

MYTH

Hospice hastens death

FACT

Hospice does nothing to hasten a person's death or artificially prolong their life. Studies have found that Hospice patients actually lived longer than those not receiving Hospice care.

People only receive six months of Hospice care

Some people worry that if the patient lives longer than six months he or she will be kicked off of Hospice services. This never happens. As long as the patient's prognosis doesn't change and he or she continues to decline – however slowly – Hospice services continue. There is absolutely no penalty if a patient lives longer than the doctor's prognosis.

Hospice is for people who have "given up"

When a patient enrolls in Hospice, the goal of care is no longer a "cure," but rather to maximize the patient's quality of life based on their choices so that the person may live life as fully as possible for the remaining time available. Hospice does not mean giving up hope, but it can help people revise what they hope for. Hope changes from finding a cure to hope for a peaceful, comfortable death, surrounded by loved ones, if they so choose.

Hospice provides 24-hour, around-the-clock care

Hospice care is provided during regular, intermittent visits, with a nurse available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If needed, Hospice can help the family arrange for a private hire, around-the-clock care attendant.

Hospice is only for the sick family member

The Hospice care team helps ALL family members and caregivers cope during this time of transition, while providing the education they may need to best care for the patient and themselves. Hospice also offers grief support counseling before and after a loved one's death.

Hospice is a place, so you must leave home to receive Hospice care

Most Hospice care is provided during regular visits wherever the patient calls home – in a private home, nursing or residential care facility, or in the hospital. In 2016, the Ida Emmerson Hospice House opened its doors to provide in-patient Hospice services in a serene setting in the redwoods.



Hospice of Humboldt is a non-profit, Medicare/Medi-Cal certified agency that meets all professional standards. We have provided hospice services to Humboldt County residents since 1979. For more information, visit www.hospiceofhumboldt.org.

Hospice of Humboldt • 3327 Timber Fall Court, Eureka, CA 95503 • ph 707.445.8443 • fax 707.445.2209