

# Hospice Insights

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*“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”*  
-Mother Teresa

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## Ten Myths about Hospice and Palliative Care

Quality end-of-life care isn't about how you die; *it's about how you live.* Hospice and palliative care focuses on how dying persons and their loved ones live each day, providing comfort and guidance along the way.

While more than 1.2 million people were cared for by the nation's 4,000 hospice programs this past year, many myths exist about hospice that deter people from seeking out this compassionate system of care.

1. *“Choosing hospice means I am giving up.”*

◆ When cure is no longer possible, hospice provides the type of care most people say they want at the end of life--comfort and quality of life. The most common statement made by families who chose hospice for their loved one is, *“we wish we had known about hospice sooner.”*

2. *“Hospice care won't allow me or my family to be involved in making decisions about treatment.”*

◆ Hospice puts patients and families at the center of care. Trained profes-

sionals provide guidance and encourage open, honest communication about individual wishes and choices.

3. *“My grandmother died in a great deal of pain, but that's just to be expected as part of the dying process.”*

◆ Hospice doctors, nurses, and others are specially trained to control each person's pain, while still keeping the patient awake and alert whenever possible.

4. *“I want to care for my husband at home; I don't want him to go to a hospice.”*

◆ Hospice is not a place, but a philosophy of care. The majority of hospice care takes place in the home, where the person can be surrounded by family and familiar settings.

5. *“My mother lives in a nursing home and I can't bring her to my home to care for her, so hospice wouldn't be available.”*

◆ Hospice and palliative care is available in nursing homes, assisted living residences, and even hospi-

tals--wherever the patient lives and considers home.

6. *“Hospice care just keeps dying people heavily medicated; all they focus on is the physical process of dying.”*

◆ Hospice pain management is highly specialized and tailored to each individual, enabling that person to live each day to the fullest, experiencing the highest quality of life possible. In addition, hospice utilizes complementary therapies such as music, massage, and pets, and provides emotional and spiritual support to the dying person and their loved ones, including bereavement support for the family after the death.

7. *“My partner's doctor suggested hospice; that must mean that my partner has only a few days left to live.”*

◆ Hospice care is available to anyone who has a life-threatening or terminal illness, with a prognosis of six months or less if the illness runs its normal course. Patients can remain in hospice longer than six months if necessary.

8. "My son is dying of AIDS, and I want the most compassionate care possible for him, but someone told me hospice care is only for older people with cancer."

◆ Hospice programs have developed guidelines to care for anyone, at any age, facing a life-threatening or terminal illness.

9. "My grandfather doesn't have private insurance, so he won't be

able to afford good end-of-life care when he needs it."

◆ Hospice is fully covered by Medicare, Medicaid, the Veteran's Administration, and most HMOs and insurance companies.

10. "We live in a rural area, so there won't be any hospice programs that can help me care for my daughter."

◆ More than 4,100 hospice programs serve all regions of the US;

less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries live in an area where hospice is not available.

To learn more, go to [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) or call 1-800-658-8898. Para Espanol: *Cuidando con Cariño*, 1-877-658-8896.

*This information is provided by Hospice of the Twin Cities and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.*

## Hospice Can Help You and Your Family

Who will care for you when you are sick? Your family? Your church? Your community?

Hospice can help you and your family by easing your pain, listening to your fears and worries, giving you a bed or walker to help you be comfortable, pay for your medicine, or read to you or help you write letters to your loved ones.

Hospice can help your family care givers learn how to safely care for you, prepare everyone for what might happen as you get sicker, help with your care, listen to your fears or worries, help with chores or errands, be there once you are gone to help them with their grief.

Hospice respects family tradition. We know each family is different and hospice works with you to provide the support you need. Hospice will talk to you and your care givers about your traditions and beliefs. We will work with your clergy to support your spiritual needs.

Hospice will support you wherever you are. We will provide care in your home, in the nursing home, assisted living, or wherever you consider home.

You do not need to worry about costs with hospice because it is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Administration, insurance and HMO's. Hospice provides care to everyone, even if they do not have financial resources to pay for hospice.

If you are thinking about calling then now is the right time. To learn more about hospice call Hospice of the Twin Cities at (763)531-2424.

You can also call the national *Compassionate Care HelpLine/Linea Cuidando con Carino* at 1-877-658-8896; *Caring connection HelpLine* at 1-800-658-8898.

To learn more, visit [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) *Partnership for Parents* website for parents with a seriously ill child:

English:  
[www.partnershipforparents.org](http://www.partnershipforparents.org)

or  
Espanol:  
[www.padrescompadres.org](http://www.padrescompadres.org)



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**We're on the Web!**  
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### Mission Statement

*Hospice of the Twin Cities' mission is to enhance the quality of the lives of our patients and their families by providing respectful care based on maintaining dignity, alleviating physical, psychosocial, and spiritual suffering, advocating for fundamental rights, and affirming the sacred value of life.*