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Issue
One

Monthly Insight Into All Things Hospice

Celebrating The JOURNEY



current topics >>>

What makes us different from other hospices?

Hospices can differentiate themselves by offering programs that celebrate each patient's special life and experiences. Take care to choose a hospice that will take the time to support your loved one as an individual and create long-lasting memories for your family.

Learn more about Serenity Point Hospice by visiting "Our Story" on our website at www.serenitypointhospice.care/our-story

Mom Needs Hospice?

Here are the questions to choose the right one...

How to Choose the Right Hospice?

With so many options available, finding the best hospice provider for your loved one can be overwhelming. On the one hand, all hospices are required to offer a base level of care and services to their patients. On the other, every hospice approaches these services differently and while some providers go above and beyond for their patients, others do only what is required.

How often will your staff visit?

Every hospice patient has a unique set of needs and every hospice will approach direct patient care and caregiver support in its own way. Ask questions to understand specifically how the provider will deliver care. "With any hospice provider, I'd want to know how often my loved one is going to be seen," says Angie. "Someone should be checking on them regularly to make sure they're ok and that they have everything they need."

While Medicare requires a registered nurse to visit hospice patients at least once every two weeks, it's important to find a hospice that will develop a care plan to address your loved one's individual needs. Serenity Point Hospice nurses visit their patients at least once a week, but maintain a schedule that can be customized. In addition to nurse's visits, progressive hospices like Serenity Point Hospice ensures aides, social workers, and

chaplains are available for visitation as well. This ensures all patients and family needs are addressed, not just the clinical ones.

To help those who are seeking the right fit, call to schedule a FREE no obligation consultation with a Serenity Point Hospice team member. "It's important for people to know that as a patient declines, they will be seen more often to ensure comfort is maintained and the necessary support is given to caregivers." It is important to know what support is offered in case of an emergency.

In addition to offering regular support, your hospice provider should be there to guide caregivers and their loved ones through any crisis that may arise. Nobody knows when an emergency may strike, so it is crucial to find a hospice with reliable, around-the-clock care. At Serenity Point Hospice we provide 24 hour round the clock ON-Call services with a live care team member, available to offer support when you need it.

set the stage >>>

Why Family & Caregivers Are Reluctant to Begin Hospice?

What makes a family caregiver hesitate to seek out information about hospice or delay asking for a referral for services?



later stages of Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, Parkinson's disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart failure just to name a few.



Hospice has a potent stigma attached to it. Viewed as a last resort or something to try when all other medical options have been exhausted, hospice is often associated with giving up and giving in to the inevitability of death. This type of care is also commonly associated with terminal cancer diagnosis. Proper end-of-life care ensures dignity, comfort and control of patients in the

Gail Gazelle, MD, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and associate scientist at the Brigham at the Women's Hospital, says that many families engage in wishful thinking when death is near. Deep down they believe that if they refuse to talk about the fact that a loved one is dying, then perhaps it won't actually happen.

End-of-Life

Another common concern is that broaching the topic of end-of-life care with an ill loved one may cause them to become depressed. While these feelings are both valid and understandable, they can also cause a caregiver to delay starting hospice and create unnecessary suffering for both the patient and their family.



hospice advice >>>

Quantity of Life vs. Quality of Life

A medical culture that makes doctors, patients and family members reluctant to admit "defeat" further devalues the benefits of hospice, which focuses more on caring for a person than attempting to cure their disease. We assume (and hope) that advances in modern medicine can somehow treat all our ailments, but for many chronic illnesses, the best that medicine can do is delay the inevitable.

Research has found that seniors often receive unnecessarily aggressive medical treatments in their last few weeks of life. A 2019 study published in *JNCI Cancer Spectrum* compiled treatment data from 100,848 patients with various types of imminently fatal metastatic cancer who died within one month of diagnosis. Researchers found that 28.3 percent of colorectal cancer patients underwent surgery, 11 percent of lung and breast cancer patients received chemotherapy, and 18.7 percent of lung cancer patients received radiotherapy in the final month of life. These aggressive treatments are known to be painful and cause bothersome symptoms and complications that seriously undermine a patient's remaining quality of life.

While this study addresses advanced cancer, Judy Bartel, MSN, ACHPN, CHPCA, FPCN, chief clinical officer for Hospice of the Western Reserve, points out that many people don't acknowledge that a disease is terminal and progressive. "I can't tell you how many times I hear, 'My mother has a little bit of heart failure,' or that a senior with COPD has a 'little bit of a breathing problem.' " This issue is caused, in part, by miscommunication between doctors, patients and caregivers. Dr. Gazelle feels that efforts must be made to better educate physicians on the merits of hospice and how to broach the topic of end-of-life care with patients and their family members. She also acknowledges the vital role that caregivers play in these discussions. "It is critical that families begin to feel more empowered to name the truth and not wait for the physician to initiate the discussion," she urges.

On-Call Service

For after-hours needs, Serenity Point Hospice provides 24-hour telephone access to hospice clinicians who can answer questions, support caregivers over the phone or dispatch a team member to the bedside, if needed.



**For more information go to
www.serenitypointhospice.care**

Essential Tips for When to Call Hospice



So, how do you know when to call hospice for elderly loved ones? Unfortunately, the answer to this question is far from simple. It can be challenging even for physicians to pinpoint when further medical care would do a senior more harm than good, so caregivers should not be responsible for making this decision alone.



The best way to address end-of-life care decisions is to have candid conversations with your loved one and their physician(s) about their prognosis, treatment options and their personal wishes. “We’re all guilty of having that Pollyannaish view of things—no one wants to face the fact that there comes a point where there’s nothing else medicine can do.” Facing reality is difficult, but after an honest care team meeting, you’ll be able to ask lingering questions and at least have current answers regarding your loved one’s condition to help you all weigh your options.

In some cases, a patient may not be capable of participating in this crucial decision, which underscores the importance of discussing end-of-life care and drafting important legal documents like advance care directives, a living will and medical power of attorney early on. If a loved one wishes to continue receiving curative treatment indefinitely, it’s important to respect their wishes and continue advocating for them. Just make sure they are aware of all their options both for ongoing treatment and for comfort care. Furthermore, be aware that their priorities for health care may change as their condition worsens.

Don’t hesitate to seek outside advice, either. While a physician’s order is needed to actually begin hospice services, anyone can contact a provider to request information about services. If it is determined that a senior is not yet a candidate for hospice care, this in no way precludes them from receiving services later. If anything, asking questions about end-of-life care early on will help you be more prepared for when the time comes. Some families even research local hospice providers, their policies and their payment methods before services are needed to ensure they are wholly prepared.

ask the experts >>>

Q: Are all hospice providers the same?

A: No

With an increasing number of hospices serving the area, you might be thinking that they all provide the same level and quality of care. While Medicare does mandate minimum requirements for every hospice program, each hospice offers these services in unique ways. Some provide only the basic services required, while others significantly exceed them. It is important to understand that the philosophy of the agency, the resources it has available and—above all else—the expertise and compassion of its staff, do make a difference!



The True Cost of Hospice...

Hospice services, including medical equipment and medications for your terminal diagnosis and related conditions, are covered under the Medicare and Medicaid Hospice Benefits. Some private insurance plans also offer a hospice benefit.

Signing on the dotted line...

Hospice care can be stopped, changed or paused at any time. Patients and families have the freedom to change their minds and not feel locked into their decision. In fact, it is common for people whose condition improves to stop or pause hospice care, knowing they can elect to use these services again in the future if/when needed.

What to expect...

Each person's journey to death is unique. Some people have a very gradual decline; others will fade quickly.

As death approaches, your role, with the support of the Hospice Team is to be present, provide comfort, and reassure your loved one with soothing words and actions that help maintain their comfort and dignity.

final thoughts.....

Of course, there will be other questions you'll ask to ensure a personal comfort level with whatever hospice provider you decide to entrust with your family member's care. The most important thing is to find the provider that offers the level of care that meets your needs. Conducting careful research, interviewing, and weighing the options thoughtfully is the best way to ensure you and your loved one will get the support and care that is deserved.



Making a choice may be confusing. With the goal of determining which hospice provider may be best, find out what they do differently. "Someone interviewing hospices should ask about what other types of services or programs the hospice provides in order to maximize a patient's end-of-life care experience," and "What does the hospice do to encourage their patients to live and love, no matter how much time they have left?"

At Serenity Point Hospice we strive to provide excellent care for individuals of all ages. Our goal is to help you maintain the highest quality of life in the comfort of your own home. Our team works together to help patients and their families cope with the all the physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of dying. We understand the importance of family and we do our best to treat your family like our own. We are here to support, listen, and respond to your care with compassion and understanding.

coming soon >>>

In The Next Issue

- Coping with a Life-Threatening Illness
- Grief Support
- Managing Pain
- Four Stages of Hospice

Grief Support Group

"FINDING SERENITY"
EVERYONE
IS WELCOME

When: Every Wednesday at 3:00 PM
Where: Covenant Community Church
2075 N Main St Canton, IL 61520
Cost: Free and open to the public

When life feels out of control and your heart is aching, "Finding Serenity Grief Support Group" helps you find spiritual peace, strength, and encouragement while celebrating life's journey.

Please call our office at 309-435-7050 or the church at 309-647-7771 for more information. It is a free service provided by Serenity Point Hospice and is open to the public.

Finding Serenity
Grief Support
Group

Contact us at **309-453-7050** www.serenitypointhospice.care