

H O S P I C E C A R E

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is Hospice?

Hospice is a special way of caring for people near the end of their life. It is a program of care with emphasis on comfort and control of pain or other symptoms. Hospice provides supportive care for patients with a limited life expectancy and their families and loved ones. Care and services are provided under a physician's direction by a team of professionals and volunteers. Team members may include the following: physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains or spiritual counselors, home health aides, volunteers, physical, occupational or speech therapists, dietitians, pharmacists, and family and friends. Emphasis is on care at home with the goal of keeping the patient as comfortable, alert and active as possible. Hospice care does not include curative treatment.

Who is eligible for Hospice?

Individuals with any terminal diagnosis, who have someone willing and able to be their primary caregiver (usually a family member or friend) are eligible for hospice. The following criteria indicate eligibility:

1. The patient's physician and the Hospice Medical Director agree that the patient's life expectancy is less than 6 months and
2. No further aggressive treatment is available or
3. The patient is refusing aggressive treatment, thus limiting life expectancy.

Greenwich Hospital Home Hospice serves patients and families who live in the following areas of Connecticut: Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, Norwalk, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, and Westport.

What are the benefits of Hospice Care?

1. Hospice care emphasizes the quality, not the duration of life. Hospice care neither hastens nor postpones death. Comfort, compassion and dignity are key; the focus is on emotional, physical and spiritual support of the patient and family.

What are the benefits of Hospice Care (*continued*)?

2. Hospice care allows patients to live their last months, weeks and days in the comfort and security of their own home, with family and friends nearby. Patients do not need to be confined to home and are helped to stay as active as possible.
3. Help is always available for medical or other emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The on-call nurse is also available for urgent questions or concerns that occur after hours or on weekends and holidays.
4. Bereavement care and support is provided for families and caregivers after the death of a loved one.

Who pays for Hospice?

Medicare and some private insurance carriers provide hospice coverage. Contributions, memorial gifts and local fundraisers also help cover the costs of care. Patients are not denied care due to inability to pay.

Where is Hospice care provided?

Home is the usual setting for hospice care. Home may be a house, an apartment or an assisted living facility. In addition to care at home, Greenwich Home Hospice provides for short-term inpatient care at Greenwich Hospital when needed. Sometimes hospital care is necessary to manage the symptoms of illness or to give the family a brief rest from the 24-hour responsibilities of caregiving. During this time, the hospice team remains involved and assists with planning for the patient to return home as soon as possible. If a patient moves to another town or state while on hospice care, arrangements can be made to transfer care to a hospice in the new location.

For further information, please call Greenwich Hospital Home Care Hospice at (203) 863-3883.