



SPEAKING UP FOR YOUR CARE

PALLIATIVE & HOSPICE CARE: What's the difference?

Palliative and hospice care are similar, but also have differences in several areas, including eligibility and insurance coverage.

PALLIATIVE CARE

- A. Provides specialized comprehensive care for persons with complex conditions and serious illnesses.
- B. Provides a team-based approach, involving doctors, nurses, social workers, and other specialists.
- C. Works individually with patients to help them manage pain, symptoms, and distress of the illness.
- D. By determining patient goals-of-care, treating symptoms, and coordinating care, patients avoid unwanted and expensive crisis care, caregivers receive support, and quality-of-life is heightened.
- E. May be provided at the same time as curative care (medical treatment to cure disease).
- F. Is appropriate for all ages.

HOSPICE CARE

- A. Provides specialized comprehensive care for persons with a terminal illness and a life expectancy of six months or less. **Note: Veterans may have additional benefits and different eligibility criteria.**
- B. Provides a team-based approach, involving doctors, nurses, social workers, and other specialists who are experts in providing care for people who are dying.
- C. Works individually with patients and caregivers to help them manage pain, symptoms, and distress of the terminal illness. Provides education about what to expect and how to respond.
- D. By determining patient goals-of-care, treating symptoms, and coordinating care, patients avoid unwanted and expensive crisis care, caregivers receive support, and quality of life is heightened.
- E. In general, hospice care may not be performed at the same time as medical treatment to cure disease, but in some instances patients may be treated for other illnesses concurrently.
- F. Is appropriate for all ages, but children aged 13 and under may have a difficult time finding available services.



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	PALLIATIVE CARE	HOSPICE CARE
Who may receive this care? What is the eligibility?	Anyone with a serious or complex illness regardless of life expectancy. Eligibility is symptom-driven. Services may be provided at any stage of illness. A physician order is necessary.	Anyone with a serious illness and a life expectancy of six months or less if the patient's disease runs its normal course. The patient's physician and a hospice physician determine eligibility based on prognosis.
May I continue to receive treatment to cure my illness?	You may receive palliative care and curative care at the same time.	In general, hospice care may not be performed at the same time as curative care, but in some instances patients may be treated for other illnesses concurrently.
Do Medicare and Medicaid pay?	Medicare does not currently offer a comprehensive benefit for palliative care. Some treatments and medications may be covered just like other medical treatments. For example, Medicare pays 80%, with the remainder billed to secondary insurance or to the patient.	Medicare Part A and Medicaid hospice benefits are "package deals." They pay 100% of charges related to hospice care, including medical equipment and medications related to the terminal illness. In addition, Medicaid may cover the cost of room and board at a facility.
Does private insurance pay?	Some treatments and medications may be covered just like other medical treatments, for example, paying 80%, with the remainder billed to secondary insurance or the patient.	Most insurance plans offer a hospice "package" benefit.
How long may I receive care?	Services may continue for as long as there is a care need, and payment depends upon the coverage provided by Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance.	The Medicare hospice benefit covers the care of a hospice patient as long as the patient is considered terminally ill with a life expectancy of six months or less.
Where are services provided?	Home, hospital, assisted or independent living facility, skilled nursing facility. Most often in a hospital or clinic.	Home, hospital, assisted or independent living facility, skilled nursing facility. Most often in the home.

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