



Hospice Explained

Hospice is a type of care that focuses on comfort and improving the quality of life for people who are nearing the end of their life. It is not about curing a disease, but rather about managing symptoms and providing emotional and spiritual support. Hospice is a Medicare covered benefit that is appropriate for people who have a terminal illness and a life expectancy of six months or less.

Medicare Eligibility

1. Medicare Part A Coverage
The individual must already be enrolled in Medicare Part A, which covers hospital inpatient care, skilled nursing facility care, hospice care, and home health care.

2. Terminal Illness Certification
A doctor, typically the patient's primary physician and a hospice physician, must certify that the individual has a terminal illness with a life expectancy of six months or less.

Benefits



Medical Care | Includes pain and symptom management, medication management, and any necessary illness related medical equipment and supplies.



Social Work and Spiritual Support | Social workers and chaplains provide counseling, emotional support, and spiritual guidance to both the patient and family.



Durable Medical Equipment (DME) | This includes items needed for the patient's comfort and care, such as wheelchairs, hospital beds, and pain management pumps.



Continuous Care | In crisis situations, Medicare will cover continuous care provided by a nurse or aide in the patient's home for a limited time.



Nursing Care | Skilled nurses will visit the patient regularly at home to assess their condition, provide treatments, and adjust the care plan as needed.



Bereavement Counseling | Medicare covers bereavement counseling for family members after the patient's passing to help them cope with grief.



Short-Term Inpatient Care | If a patient's symptoms cannot be managed at home for a short period, Medicare covers inpatient care at a hospital or hospice center.

Hospice care includes limited caregiving support for the patient and family. Oftentimes, families choose to work with private duty in-home care agencies to provide additional care for the patient and support for the family.



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