

Hospice at Home



Dying is Inevitable, Suffering is Optional

**Why Hospice Is the Best Choice:
Understanding Hospice Care**

Table of Contents

- 2) 4 Common Myths About Hospice**
- 3) A Brief Modern History of Dying**
- 3) Hospitals are for the Sick, Not the Dying**
- 4) What, in Fact, is Hospice Care?**
- 5) A Concise Overview of the Origins of Hospice**
- 7) Considering Home Hospice vs Freestanding Hospice or Hospital**
- 7) Dignity Comes from Within**
- 8) It's All About the Patient**
- 8) Managing The Case Manager Your Best Friend**
- 11) All Hospices are Not Created Equal**
- 12) Plan to Learn New Skills**
- 12) Being a Patient Advocate**
- 13) What's Really Important?**

Why Hospice Is the Best Choice: Understanding Hospice Care

Understanding hospice and creating an excellent therapeutic relationship between the patient, the caregiver and the hospice team of professionals.

The worst thing you can imagine has happened: Someone you know has been given a death sentence. Not by a jury or a judge; by the doctor-- the person they trusted to get them through one of the most challenging times of their life. But the doctor didn't get them through. He or she met with the patient or family one day and, probably with an attitude of defeat said something like, "We've done all we can. Your body's not responding to treatment. There's nothing more to do." And everyone thinks, "This is the end."

But it's not the end. In fact, it can be the beginning of a very warm, even beautiful process that honors the dying person and leads them and those they care about through the "end game" of life with dignity and grace.

Today, home hospice is possibly the best way to maximize quality of life and comfort when treatment ceases to be effective. This report is designed to present the basic facts about hospice, and, if hospice is chosen, to assist all involved in making it the best possible experience.

2

4 Common Myths about Hospice

Though hospice care has become reasonably widespread in the US, there are still some basic misunderstandings about it. The following is a good place to start when considering whether hospice is a good choice for you or someone you care about.

- *Hospice is a place.* People often think that hospice is a freestanding place, like a hospital or convalescent home that they go into. While there are freestanding hospices, hospice is more accurately thought of as an approach to care, not a place.
- *Accepting hospice care is giving up.* There is a perception on the part of some people that goes something like this: "I'm dying, now I'm on hospice, this is it, I give up." While treatment doesn't end in hospice, the focus is less on "fighting" a disease or condition, and more on living productively in this end-of-life stage, and gaining the greatest comfort in the process. Hospice is less about "giving up," and really more about coming into acceptance than if the conventional