HOSPICE 101 & A BRIEF HISTORY

The philosophy, team, services, and milestones behind hospice care.

Hospice is a philosophy and program of care for people living with a terminal illness. It prioritizes comfort, symptom relief, quality of life, and support for the patient and family through an interdisciplinary approach.

THE HOSPICE PHILOSOPHY

Care is centered on the person—not only the illness. Hospice supports physical comfort, emotional needs, social connections, spiritual concerns, dignity, and personal goals.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

A care team may include physicians, nurses, hospice aides, social workers, chaplains, volunteers, and other professionals. The team coordinates around an individualized plan.

WHAT HOSPICE CAN PROVIDE

Symptom management, nursing, physician services, medications related to comfort, medical equipment and supplies, aide services, counseling, caregiver education, and bereavement support.

WHERE HOSPICE CARE HAPPENS

Hospice is commonly provided at home or where a patient resides. Additional levels of care are available when clinical needs require a different setting.

WHAT FAMILIES CAN EXPECT

A plan of care, communication, education, support through changes, help with symptoms, and resources for caregiving and grief.

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care focuses on relief of symptoms and stress of serious illness and may be provided alongside treatment. Hospice is a specific end-of-life benefit for patients who meet eligibility and elect hospice.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOSPICE

1967	St. Christopher's Hospice opens in London under Dame Cicely Saunders, helping establish the modern hospice model.
1974	Connecticut Hospice is founded in Branford, Connecticut, marking an early modern hospice program in the United States.
1977	The National Hospice Organization is formed to support hospice advocacy, education, standards, and development.
1982	Congress enacts legislation establishing the Medicare Hospice Benefit.
1983	The Medicare hospice benefit begins implementation, expanding access for eligible Medicare beneficiaries.
TODAY	Hospice care is a coordinated, interdisciplinary service that supports comfort, dignity, quality of life, and families.

Historical overview: St. Christopher's Hospice, U.S. hospice development, and Medicare hospice benefit history.

Hospice is more than medical care. It is a coordinated approach to comfort, dignity, and support for patients and the people who care for them.

Historical timeline is a brief overview. Hospice programs and Medicare coverage have continued to evolve.

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