RIVER CITY HOSPICE

UNDERSTANDING HOSPICE CARE

A guide for patients, families, caregivers, and referral partners.

Hospice is specialized, interdisciplinary care for people with a terminal illness. The focus shifts to comfort, symptom management, dignity, and support for the patient and family rather than treatment intended to cure the terminal illness.

WHO MAY QUALIFY

A physician must certify that the patient's illness is terminal and the prognosis is six months or less if the illness follows its normal course. Eligibility is based on clinical circumstances, not age alone.

THE CARE TEAM

Depending on the plan, care may include hospice physicians, nurses, hospice aides, social workers, chaplains, volunteers, and other professionals working together.

WHAT HOSPICE MAY INCLUDE

Nursing and physician services; medications for symptom control; medical equipment and supplies; aide and homemaker services; social work; counseling; and therapies when appropriate to the plan.

WHERE CARE IS PROVIDED

Care is commonly delivered where the patient lives—at home, assisted living, or a nursing facility. Inpatient hospice care may be used when symptoms cannot be managed in another setting.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILY

Families receive education, guidance, caregiver support, help understanding changes, and bereavement resources. Support is tailored to the patient and family's needs.

HOSPICE IS NOT GIVING UP

Hospice honors comfort, dignity, and personal goals. Patients may choose hospice, and they may also choose to revoke the hospice election if they later pursue treatment intended to cure the terminal illness.

THE FOUR MEDICARE LEVELS OF HOSPICE CARE

ROUTINE HOME CARE

The usual level of care where the patient resides, when they are not in a crisis requiring another level.

CONTINUOUS HOME CARE

Short-term, intensive home care during a crisis to help manage symptoms and maintain the patient at home.

INPATIENT RESPITE

Short-term inpatient care, generally up to five consecutive days, to provide relief for the caregiver.

GENERAL INPATIENT CARE

Inpatient care for pain or symptoms that cannot be adequately managed in another setting.

Hospice care is individualized. The team works with the patient, family, and physician to develop and update the plan of care.

Eligibility, care setting, and level of care are determined according to clinical requirements and the hospice plan of care.

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