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 Serenity Point Hospice, LLC



Monthly Insight Into All Things Hospice

Celebrating The **JOURNEY**

current topics >>>

Combating Hospice Misconceptions?

Both hospice and palliative care present an enormous number of challenges for clinicians and patients alike. From facilitating difficult conversations to managing grief and emotional distress to the specific nuances of determining what is right for any given patient, the list goes on. But with so many challenges in hospice and palliative care, there are a few bigger ones that stand out. Through understanding and overcoming these challenges, patients, their loved ones, and clinicians can pave the way to better care with less challenges down the road.

“Hospice is giving up.” “Hospice is too expensive.” Maybe you have heard these statements said about hospice care at some point. Maybe you have said them yourself. There are unfortunately many misconceptions about hospice out there.

Hospice care can be misunderstood. But contrary to the hearsay and myths you may have heard, the purpose of hospice is to provide care, support and comfort to both patients and their family members. Hospice is “building” a team of highly specialized, uniquely qualified, truly optimistic, and profoundly compassionate professionals who have dedicated their lives to making a positive difference in the life of you or a loved one.

Hospice is “getting up” a slew of specialized, patient-specific treatment modalities that will effectively minimize or alleviate the condition’s symptoms. Hospice is “getting up” a plan of care that ensures the outcome is always focused on the patient and family.

While you cannot predict the future, when you choose Serenity Point Hospice, you can be confident that you will be provided with a team of professionals who will never give up on providing you and your family with the best possible care. Even if the disease progresses as expected. Studies show that terminally ill patients who receive hospice care live longer than similar patients who do not receive hospice care.

Patients in hospice experience a sense of relief and control. Regular visits from their nurse and hospice aide help to control pain and other symptoms, reducing the need for emergency hospitalization. Being at home with family and friends can improve one’s quality of life. Conversations with the team’s social worker or chaplain help to alleviate emotional distress. Slowly, a hospice patient and their family begin to look forward to the future.

Hospice care empowers patients to have control over how they spend their final months.



set the stage >>>

Why Family & Caregivers Are Reluctant to Begin Hospice?

What makes a family caregiver hesitate to seek out information about hospice or delay asking for a referral for services?



later stages of Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, Parkinson's disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart failure just to name a few.



Hospice has a potent stigma attached to it. Viewed as a last resort or something to try when all other medical options have been exhausted, hospice is often associated with giving up and giving in to the inevitability of death. This type of care is also commonly associated with terminal cancer diagnosis. Proper end-of-life care ensures dignity, comfort and control of patients in the

Gail Gazelle, MD, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and associate scientist at the Brigham at the Women's Hospital, says that many families engage in wishful thinking when death is near. Deep down they believe that if they refuse to talk about the fact that a loved one is dying, then perhaps it won't actually happen.

End-of-Life

Another common concern is that broaching the topic of end-of-life care with an ill loved one may cause them to become depressed. While these feelings are both valid and understandable, they can also cause a caregiver to delay starting hospice and create unnecessary suffering for both the patient and their family.



On-Call Service

For after-hours needs, Serenity Point Hospice provides 24-hour telephone access to hospice clinicians who can answer questions, support caregivers over the phone or dispatch a team member to the bedside, if needed.

For more information go to www.serenitypointhospice.care



hospice advice >>>

Managing Pain

End-of-life care can be a challenge requiring the full range of a family physician's skills. Significant pain is common but is often undertreated despite available medications and technology. Starting with an appropriate assessment and following recommended guidelines on the use of analgesics, family physicians can achieve successful pain relief in nearly 90 percent of dying patients.

Physicians must overcome their own fears about using narcotics and allay similar fears in patients, families and communities. Drugs such as corticosteroids, antidepressants and anticonvulsants can also help to alleviate pain. Anticonvulsants can be especially useful in relieving neuropathic pain. Side effects of pain medications should be anticipated and treated promptly, but good pain control should be maintained. The physical, psychologic, social and spiritual needs of dying patients are best managed with a team approach. Home visits can provide comfort and facilitate the doctor-patient relationship at the end of life.

Providing Physical Comfort

There are ways to make a person who is dying more comfortable. Discomfort can come from a variety of problems. For each, there are things you or a healthcare provider can do, depending on the cause. For example, a dying person can be uncomfortable because of:

- Pain
- Breathing problems
- Skin irritation
- Digestive problems
- Temperature sensitivity
- Fatigue

Not everyone who is dying experiences pain, but there are things you can do to help someone who does. We believe that care for someone who is dying should focus on relieving pain without worrying about possible long-term problems of drug dependence or abuse.

Managing Misconceptions



Now, more than ever, there is a sense of urgency in our country to start discussions about how we would want to be treated, if we were faced with a life-limiting illness. Discussing end of life care options, preparing advance directives, and letting our loved ones know our wishes, are all important topics. Hospice care can provide innumerable benefits to those with life-limiting illnesses, and their loved ones. But there are many hospice care misconceptions and it is important to learn as much as possible about how hospice care might benefit you, or your loved one. We have many choices about the services we receive toward the end of life, and hospice care is an important one to consider.

“Hospice patients can’t resume traditional medical care.”

Hospice is a choice, and patients who choose hospice care can always choose to seek aggressive treatments again, if desired. A patient may qualify and choose hospice support, and then improve or decide to seek aggressive treatment. They can easily revoke their hospice benefit, and resume traditional care at any time. Hospice is also not just a one-time benefit. If someone qualifies for hospice support but then decides they no longer wish to receive it, or no longer meet criteria, they can also decide to resume hospice support at a later date, as long as they meet criteria. There is no limit to the number of times that a patient can receive Hospice care in their lifetime.

“Individuals have to give up their own doctor.”

Individuals may keep their own physician, who will work closely with the Hospice team of healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and medical social workers to plan and carry out care.

“Patients must be bedridden to qualify for hospice.”

Those with life-limiting illnesses may struggle to do some of the things they once did. But hospice is founded on the idea that, with proper pain and symptom management, patients can enjoy a much better quality of life. Hospice patients are encouraged to do those things they most enjoy and desire to do, to fulfill their “bucket list”. Things like spending time with friends, going out to dinner and shows, even camping and traveling. There are no age or disease restrictions to receive hospice services. Anyone with a life-limiting illness may qualify to receive support. Hospice may be appropriate for those with any progressive condition such as: cancer, Alzheimer’s/dementia, stroke, pulmonary diseases, or liver disease just to name a few.

Looking forward, physicians must prioritize having open and truthful conversations about hospice and palliative care with patients and their families as soon as possible. This way, we can begin to combat all of the misconceptions and challenges in hospice and palliative care and provide more timely

Q: Do I Have to Stop Other Medication If I’m in Hospice?

A: *When you begin hospice care, medication and other treatments to cure or control your serious illness will stop. For example, if you are receiving chemotherapy that is meant to treat or cure your cancer, that must end before you can enter hospice care. However, a person in hospice can continue to take medications to treat other conditions or symptoms, for example, high blood pressure*



The True Cost of Hospice...

Hospice services, including medical equipment and medications for your terminal diagnosis and related conditions, are covered under the Medicare and Medicaid Hospice Benefits. Some private insurance plans also offer a hospice benefit.

Coping with loss & the Holidays.....

Celebrating holidays during bereavement is hard. Many people who are grieving find this time of year to be particularly challenging. From attending a grief support group to opting out of the holidays altogether, there are many things you can do to support yourself through the holiday season.

1. Feel your Feelings
2. Be Specific & Write Out Your Emotions
3. Don’t Resist the Grief
4. Show Yourself Self Compassion
5. Ask for Help & Support
6. Honor them with a Simple Tradition
7. Start New Traditions
8. Socialize as You Feel Able
9. Attend a Support Group
10. Honor your Loved One

final thoughts....

Don't Wait – Hospice Provides Months of Care and Support

We hear it far too often: "I wish we had called hospice sooner." Once people have experienced the level of care their loved one gets, as well as the education and support provided to family members, they understand how much having a hospice care team improves the whole family's quality of life. With help with patient hygiene needs; assistance from volunteers to provide companionship, respite, and help with other tasks; education on disease progression; and clinical support you can call anytime of the day or night; families can concentrate on what's most important to



You don't have to wait, you can refer yourself, a family member, neighbor or a friend.

Because families are often waiting for someone to tell them "it's time," they miss out on months of care and improved quality of life. The Medicare Hospice Benefit provides for several months of care and covers all care, medications, supplies and medical care related to the patient's disease. It is available once the patient's doctor determines that given the current rate of decline the patient has a life expectancy that is no longer curable.

Other benefits families experience include emotional and spiritual care; help in connecting with needed resources; education on the patient's disease, how it progresses, and what they can do to make them comfortable; assistance from volunteers in planning a special celebration, fulfilling a bucket list wish, or just being a companion that takes time to talk or read them a book; and grief support before and after death.

Time after time, we've seen patients and their families wait to sign on to hospice until their very last days. Why? Sometimes it's because they don't know about hospice; yet, more often it's because they fear the "H" word and all that it signifies. Death is just not a place people want to go — be they providers or patients.

Death can be beautiful and peaceful at Serenity Point Hospice we strive to provide excellent care for individuals of all ages. Our goal is to show you the beautiful side of hospice. It is to help you maintain the highest quality of life in the comfort of your own home. Our team works together to help patients and their families cope with all the physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of dying. We understand the importance of family and we do our best to treat your family like our own. We are here to support, listen, and respond to your care with compassion and understanding.

coming soon >>>

In The Next Issue

- *Coping with Anxiety*
- *Making Memories*
- *Anticipatory Grief*

Grief Support Group
"FINDING SERENITY"
Where everyone
is welcome



When life feels out of control and your heart is aching, "Finding Serenity Grief Support Group" helps you find spiritual peace, strength, and encouragement while celebrating life's journey.

Please call our office 309-435-7050 or the church 309-647-7771 for more information.

It is a FREE service provided by Serenity Point Hospice and is open to the public.

When: Every Wednesday at 3:00 PM

**Where: Covenant Community Church
2075 N Main St Canton, IL 61520**

Cost: Free and open to the public



Contact us at 309-453-7050 / www.serenitypointhospice.care