Hospice Care for HIV/AIDS Patients

Not so long ago, in the 1980’s, people were on high alert concerning the deadly disease HIV/AIDS. It was a time of worldwide panic when the public was uninformed and naive to this deadly issue and those who contracted this disease were subject to shunning and rejection from society. The medical community and public now have a better understanding of this disease and of the needs of HIV/AIDS sufferers concerning their treatments, medications, and hospice care. Our organization has made it our mission to provide the highest level of care for those in search of terminal care, understanding, and compassion.

Is now the right time to inquire about hospice care?

The right time to ask about our organization and our services is now. The time to act on your inquiries is an individual decision. Each situation is different, as each patient is unique. The victims of HIV/AIDS normally receive diagnoses to live only six months or less. Things such as the decision to cease the aid of medical advances including breathing machines or feeding tubes will affect this window of time. At this stage of progression in the disease may be the right time to act and contact our organization for compassionate hospice care.

Qualified physicians are responsible for making the clinical determination if a patient is in need of our services.
However, if a patient with HIV/AIDS is experiencing any or some of the following conditions; it may be time to enact our services for expert care:

- Reoccurring emergency medical needs
- Occurrence of a serious secondary life threatening issue such as cervical or anal cancer, heart disease, or lymphoma
- High viral loads and low CD4 counts, which are not benefiting with antiviral therapy
- Multiple hospitalizations resulting in the desire for complete specialized care

For patients and their families who are still unsure if the time is right to enact our services for their hospice care, requesting an evaluation will get the answers and clear up any concerns. Physicians may suggest hospice care when they feel the time is right, but only the patient and their families are responsible for the decision. When the time is right, give our services a call to schedule an evaluation to see if the time is right for the benefits of our hospice care.

**How is hospice care beneficial to the HIV/AIDS patient?**

The care that our service provides gives the patient relief from pain and we create a stress free and peaceful environment to encourage our patient’s utmost comfort, dignity, and peace. We design our hospice services to accommodate the needs of our HIV/AIDS victims. We are able to control and manage such things as:

**Pain management and opportunistic illnesses**

Because of the lowered strength of the immune system, HIV/AIDS
sufferers often develop secondary common illnesses and viruses. Our services are aware of these conditions and we strive to provide the highest quality of pain management to ensure our patient’s utmost comfort.

**The patient’s silent voice**

When the patient has developed the need for an advocate for their care, our services will ensure the proper administering of care and antiviral therapy. Many patients improve and leave the hospice care, while others are cared for with psychosocial support, symptom, and pain management techniques.

**Tailored care**

Each case of HIV/AIDS comes with its own variables and stages. Our services address all areas of the patient’s needs including such things as reoccurring illnesses, skin care, pain management, nutrition, and proper hydration. Our experience in the care of our patients allows us to recognize the best times to enact these hospice services for each individual person.

**Home services**

Our services include home visits, assisted living communities, and long-term hospice care. In the event that our services are no longer necessary, the patient is encouraged to return to their daily lives at home.

**Security net of care**

When you enact on our services for your care, our team will develop an individual plan that we tailor to meet each patient’s unique situation and needs. We cooperate with your physician to ensure that all medications and necessary medical supplies are available to our patients in our care. Open communication between our services and all of the medical
personnel involved ensures the highest level of precise support for each and every HIV/AIDS victim.

**Internal support**

Our services are not limited to only the medical issues of HIV/AIDS management; we also offer support for emotional and spiritual concerns as well.

**What benefit does hospice care offer to the family of patients with HIV/AIDS?**

Dealing with a loved one suffering from the HIV/AIDS virus is often very difficult for family and our services are here to help. We understand the needs for emotional support during the difficult times of hard decision-making and overwhelming conditions. Our services can assist in the areas of:

**Training and information**

Our services help caregivers to understand the needs of the patient as the disease progresses, and we offer support and training for the end stages of the disease as the victim is less able to communicate their needs.

**Decision making**

Our services are accustomed to dealing with the difficult decisions that are involved in these situations and we are prepared to explain and lead family members through the most
difficult of decisions that they will ever have to make.

24/7 assistance

We are available to offer support and information any time of the day or night. There is never a good time to have to deal with HIV/AIDS but we are available whenever your situation calls for assistance. Patients and their families will always have support with our services.

Spiritual and emotional support

Our team assures that the HIV/AIDS victim and family have the proper emotional and spiritual support to remain in a healthy state of mind during the most difficult of times.

Financial support

Our services will help with the burden of dealing with medical bills, Medicare, Medicaid/Medi-Cal, and private insurance companies. Social workers and human services to deal with financial concerns before and after the passing of the HIV/AIDS patient offer further assistance. Long-term follow up assistance is also available for the families.

Relief care and support

Regardless of the deep emotion and love that caregivers feel for the AIDS/HIV Victim, the stress of dealing with such a cruel disease is often overwhelming. Our services offer caregivers a break for up to five days to regroup and step away from the stressful situation.

Grief counseling

We realize that the death of the HIV/AIDS patient is not the end of the suffering for the affected family and loved ones. We offer our hospice services for a year after the victim’s
passing to assure that the remaining family is able to adequately cope with their loss.

What are the positive benefits of HIV/AIDS hospice care for patients and their families?

Hospice care is much more than changing bedpans and administering medications. Patients and families alike benefit from our services in a holistic manner. We treat the entire range of patient and family needs from the physical, emotional, and spiritual concerns.

Relief

Our services are available to support and offer assurance in the most difficult of end-of-life situations. We assist in the individual attention that each patient deserves, while striving to deliver quality of life assistance to our patients and their families. We are here to listen, advocate, and offer the highest levels of comfort and support.

Avoiding Hospitalizations

Individuals with the HIV/AIDS virus are likely to spend a lot of time in and out of the hospital in the end stages of the disease. In the final days of the patient’s fight against the AIDS/HIV virus, enlisting in the services of hospice care will decrease the instances of hospitalization of the patient.

Peace of mind

We offer a valuable asset with our individualized services and medical support. Our assistance is available at any time of the day or night. We offer the resources, training, and support that are necessary for every single person affected by
this deadly disease.

What is the best way to open the discussion about hospice care with family and loved ones?

The issues involved with life and death decisions are full of emotion and difficult decisions. Finding the “right time” to start the discussion about hospice care may never come, so it is imperative that the patient bring the conversation to light. It is important to open the lines of communication about the situation and formulate a plan so that all involved can best handle the upcoming battle.

How much does the family understand about the HIV/AIDS virus?

It is important to know what the knowledge level of the family or loved one is concerning the HIV/AIDS virus. Family members may not receive the news about the prognosis well. The situation may require assistance in the explanations required to achieve a balanced understanding of the situation and overall care plan.

Expand the conversation to involve what the plan is for the future for both the patient and the family. This is the time to discuss the patient care wishes as well as the perfect time to address the family’s feelings about the final care days and life after the loss of their loved one. Bringing hospice into the conversation will help to ease the stress of the situation for all of the people involved by offering assurance of
qualified assistance, support, and understanding.

**Knowledge is power**

Before enacting a conversation with family or loved ones, it is important that the patient themselves understands every aspect of their condition and the disease progression. Knowledge of the current status and condition of the HIV/AIDS virus is as important as the knowledge of the misconceptions and myths surrounding this disease. It may be necessary to dispel family members concerns with the misleading information that they have encountered in the past.

**Let your voice be heard**

It is perfectly acceptable for the patient to voice their wishes and expectations. When you bring these requests into the open, it is easy for the people involved to actively formulate a plan for the future care and hospice needs of the HIV/AIDS victim. There is security in knowing that there is a definite direction to follow and being able to prepare for each stage of the future.

**Loved Ones Speaking to HIV/AIDS Patients**

Bringing up a delicate subject such as the HIV/AIDS virus is difficult at best. Being prepared is key to an open and honest discussion about the future of the situation.

**Be knowledgeable**

Educate yourself on all areas concerning the disease, progression, and how hospice will benefit all who are involved in this exhausting experience.
Be courteous and respectful

Gain the permission of the patient to discuss this very personal matter in an open and honest manner. This will let the patient know immediately that you respect their wishes and desires.

Listen Openly

Listening is perhaps one of the most important things that you can do. By allowing the patient to voice their opinions and concerns, you will be able to gauge your response and dispel any misconceptions the patient may have about their care and hospice.

Establish their personal wishes

It is important that caregivers openly address the feelings and wishes of the patient. When you allow the patient to voice their wishes, it empowers them with the security of knowing that they will receive care with honor and respect through the most difficult times of the remainder of their life.

Establish a clear understanding of control

Patients are often reluctant to relinquish control of the decision-making about their healthcare to other people. Our services offer many options to our patients and are completely individualized for the comfort and peace of the HIV/AIDS victim. It is important that the patient is aware that they are in control of their future and our services are available for the assistance during this somber end-of-life process.
Introduce the Hospice Choice

It may be helpful to explain the benefits and offerings of our services before suggesting that the patient enroll in a hospice program. Once the patient has an understanding of the professional care and support that our services offer, they may be more receptive to the inclusion of hospice in their treatment and crucial care at the end of their struggle with HIV/AIDS.

Contact Harbor Light Hospice for Support

Harbor Light Hospice can greatly bolster the overall quality of life for HIV/AIDS patients and their families. To learn more about our supportive services, call one of our locations or contact us online today.