Hospice Versus Palliative Care

Both hospice and palliative care are options for providing care to patients with illnesses that affect their ability to take care of themselves. Palliative care, while a component of hospice care, can be considered a separate area of medical care for patients receiving one of these types of treatment. Palliative care focuses on relieving symptoms alongside the active medical treatment of a patient’s medical condition.

Understanding Hospice Care

Hospice care addresses the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients with life-limiting illnesses. Often, hospice care includes administration of prescribed medications and assistance with bathing, dressing and other routine activities. However, there are many different levels of care provided. In many cases, the care being provided is not full-time. It requires a caregiver, usually a family member, to be with the patient or other alternate arrangements.

Situations for Both Hospice and Palliative Care

Only terminally ill patients receive hospice care. It is frequently employed when medical treatment is no longer being used to cure an illness and when, if the disease runs its normal course, the patient is in the final six months of life. This diagnosis must be given by one or two physicians depending on the state. On the other hand, palliative care can be employed regardless of time frame and life expectancy and during active treatment.
Emotional Support

Both hospice and palliative care focus on the patient’s family as well as the patient. Hospice can offer psychosocial and spiritual counseling which address discomfort caused by non-physical symptoms.

Insurance

The Medicare Hospice Benefit and Medicaid Hospice Benefit both cover hospice care in full. The Veteran’s Administration and many private insurance providers also cover hospice care, though they may require the payment of co-pays. Our organization provides hospice and palliative care to all members of our community who are in need and meet the care criteria.

Medicare, Medicaid, and many forms of private insurance also cover palliative care if the patient meets their criteria.

Location of Care

The patient’s home is the most common setting for hospice care, be it a house, apartment, or nursing home or assisted living facility. Some services are conducted in hospitals, dedicated hospice facilities and skilled nursing facilities.

Palliative care is commonly delivered in the patient’s home or apartment, though it can also be received during the course of a short-term hospital stay.