

Hospice Care Myths and Facts

Hospice is a special concept of care designed to provide comfort and support to patients and their families with life limiting illnesses. The goal of hospice care is to improve the quality of a patient's final days by offering comfort and dignity.

Myth: Choosing hospice means giving up hope.

Fact: Hospice is about quality of life and hope preservation.

Myth: Hospice is only for dying people.

Fact: As a family-centered concept of care, hospice focuses as much on the grieving family as on the dying patient.

Myth: Hospice is a facility.

Fact: Hospice care is provided wherever the patient may reside (i.e., home, skilled nursing or assisted living facility, hospital).

Myth: Hospice means that the patient will soon die.

Fact: Receiving hospice care does not mean giving up hope or that death is imminent. The earlier an individual receives hospice care, the more opportunity there is to stabilize your medical condition and address other needs. Some patients actually improve and may be discharged from hospice care.

Myth: Patients can only receive hospice care for a limited amount of time.

Fact: The Medicare benefit, and non-Medicare Kaiser Permanente plans, pays for hospice care as long as the patient continues to meet the criteria necessary.

Myth: Patients have to give up their own doctor.

Fact: Patients may keep their own physician, who will work closely with Orange County Home Hospice Medical Team to plan and carry out care and is regularly informed of the patient condition.

Myth: Families have to pay for hospice care.

Fact: The Medicare Hospice benefit covers the care of the hospice patient as long as patient remains eligible. Kaiser Permanente Non-Medicare plans provide coverage consistent with other medical care under your plan. For those with deductibles, they apply in the same way.

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Myth: Hospice is just for the patient.

Fact: Hospice focuses on comfort, dignity, and emotional support. The quality of life for the patient, but also family members and caregivers, is the highest priority.

Myth: Hospice provides 24-hour care.

Fact: The hospice team (which includes physician, nurses, social workers, hospice aides, spiritual care counselor and volunteer) visits patients intermittently based on patient's medical condition and skilled needs, and are available 24 hours a day/7 days a week for support and care. The hospice team can coordinate for Continuous Care, General Inpatient Level of Care and Respite Care, if necessary, based on patient's skilled needs and need for stabilization of symptoms.

Myth: Hospice is only for cancer patients.

Fact: A large number of hospice patients have congestive heart failure, end stage liver or renal disease, chronic lung disease, or other conditions.

Myth: Only a doctor can refer a patient for hospice care.

Fact: Actually, anyone can refer a patient for hospice care. The information will be taken and the patient's doctor will be contacted to gain permission to assess the patients for eligibility.

Myth: Suffering is a part of hospice care because traditional medicine is no longer allowed (no curative treatments).

Fact: Managing pain and other symptoms is one of the key goals in hospice care. Medications are used as needed to control pain/symptoms.

If you have further questions regarding Kaiser Permanente Orange County Home Hospice Program, please call 1 (877) 896-3560, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

