15 things you should know about hospice

1 hospice focuses on life

When you have a life-limiting illness, Hospice of Kitsap County offers compassionate, expert care that helps you to live each day to the fullest. Once the decision has been made to stop curative treatment, the focus is on attainable comfort rather than unachievable cure.

While end-of-life is obviously an extremely difficult part of the life cycle, it also provides special opportunities--to strengthen relationships, to put one's affairs in order, to find spiritual peace. This is only possible, however, if the patient can find effective relief from the pain and symptoms characterizing the progression of life-limiting illness.

2 hospice comes to you

When surveyed, more than 90 percent of Americans said they would prefer to die at home. Yet more than two-thirds die in nursing homes and hospitals.

Hospice of Kitsap County is not a place; it is a comprehensive program of services that come to you. We want you to be as comfortable and alert as possible, spending precious time with your loved ones in familiar surroundings whether a private home, apartment, or long-term care facility.

3 hospice serves all

The Medicare hospice benefit covers all expenses involved in your hospice care. Hospice care also is covered under Medicaid and most private insurance plans.

Hospice of Kitsap County provides care to everyone regardless of ability to pay. We can do this thanks to the support and generosity of the community we serve.

4 hospice is expert medical care, but towards a different goal

The shift is from cure to comfort. Hospice of Kitsap County patients work with a special team of health professionals with expertise in palliative care --a medical specialty devoted to relieving pain and managing symptoms, not to curing a disease. Few doctors and nurses outside hospice have this specialized training.

5 hospice cares for the patient & their loved ones

When a patient is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, everyone involved experiences periods of stress, uncertainty, doubt, worry, and confusion. Hospice of Kitsap County treats you and your loved ones--family members being whomever the patient determines to be his or her family--as a single unit of care.

6 hospice is on-call 24 hours

Besides regularly-scheduled home visits, you can always talk by telephone to a nurse who is trained to assess unexpected situations. The nurse can answer your questions and ease your mind. When the situation warrants, a doctor or nurse can be dispatched to the home at any time. We can be reached by phone 24 hours daily, 365 days per year.

7 hospice regards death as part of the continuum of life

Hospice neither prolongs life nor hastens death. We provide personalized services, information and a caring community so that you and your family can make end-of-life a time that need not be filled with fear and anxiety.

7 hospice respects your decisions

You may not be in control of your illness, but you are in control of your care. Recognizing that ignorance promotes fear, Hospice of Kitsap County professionals provide the information you need to make informed, thoughtful decisions.

However, you and your loved ones make those choices.

Because the nature of dying is unique, it is always our goal to be sensitive and responsive to the special requirements of your situation. We want you and your loved ones to remain as in charge of your lives as possible.

8 hospice is a team of compassionate, expert health professionals

The hospice team includes your doctor, registered nurse, certified nursing assistant, social worker, chaplain, and specially trained patient care volunteer(s).

With its range of expertise, the Hospice of Kitsap County team can address the whole scope of end-of-life issues, taking a tremendous weight off of your shoulders.

10 hospice includes your doctor

Your primary care physician will continue in that role signing off on all treatment orders and plans recommended by the hospice team.

11 hospice means having a coach

A good coach teaches, supports, and demonstrates. Caring for a loved one at home involves learning many new skills. Hospice of Kitsap County team members do a lot of teaching, showing caregivers how to change dressings, use a pain pump, bathe the patient, deliver medications on schedule, provide oral care, and more.

12 hospice helps with talking about difficult issues

Legal and financial concerns as well as medical issues have to be addressed. These subjects can be scary, and most everyone feels anxious. In addition, many families have unresolved issues that can make communication difficult.

Unfortunately, these patterns tend to intensify during a crisis, increasing feelings of isolation and helplessness.

The Hospice of Kitsap County team can help open the lines of communication.

13 hospice is an opportunity to attend to end-of-life concerns

End-of-life can be a very special time for you and your family. With pain and symptoms under control, you can attend to several issues pressing for your attention:

* Completing unfinished emotional issues
* Saying goodbye
* Making financial arrangements
* Drawing up a will
* Completing an advance medical directive
* Spiritual search for meaning in one's life
* Life review: time to reflect & take inventory of your life

14 hospice means flexibility

You are never "locked in" to Hospice of Kitsap County; you can opt out of hospice care at any time without penalty. In fact, when pain and symptoms are managed effectively, many patients show improvement. Sometimes a patient's condition improves or stabilizes to the extent that he or she can temporarily do without hospice services.

Hospice patients are not necessarily bed-ridden, either. Thanks to expert pain and symptom management, we have patients who are able to fly across country to attend a special family event, to visit a cherished place and to enjoy simple pleasures like a walk in the park.

15 hospice is help with grief

For you and your loved ones, the grief process begins with the terminal diagnosis, as everyone begins to contemplate the many losses ahead. The Hospice of Kitsap County social worker helps to process this "anticipatory grief." After death, we offer bereavement services--support groups, counseling, and education--to your loved ones for 15 months.

Another benefit of hospice care: Caregivers often find the grieving process easier to manage after having been intimately involved in the end-of-life process.

Hospice of Kitsap County

dignity ♥ compassion ♥ comfort

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