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## **Hospice and the Family Caregiver**

Caring for a loved one at the end of life is one of the most physically and emotionally demanding situations you may ever face.

There is a sense of loss and sadness that begins when a family learns of a serious or life-limiting diagnosis, and stress can continue to grow throughout the illness. There can be a financial toll that caring for a dying loved one brings. Even when the role of caregiver ends, new issues arise as the person processes the loss in their life and faces living without their loved one.

For family members thrust into the role of caregiver without warning or little preparation, the experience can be frightening.

Yet care exists that addresses many of these concerns: Hospice.

Hospice provides high-quality care and services to the patient while offering invaluable support to the family caregivers. Through bereavement care and services, assistance for family caregivers continues even after their loved one dies.

In addition to expert medical care and pain management, hospice focuses on the quality of life for patients and families. They help the people they serve live life to its fullest. The wishes of the patient and family are always a priority and hospice brings hope, dignity and peace to all for whom they care.

Support, caregiving training and assistance are made available by hospice professionals and trained volunteers. The entire hospice team brings compassion and empathy when they are needed most.

Many families concerned with the costs of care are often surprised to learn hospice is fully covered by Medicare. Medicaid, most private insurance plans and HMOs also provide for hospice care. Yet hospices care for all in need, regardless of ability to pay.

Many people do not understand the support and comfort that hospice provides to patients and families at the end of life's journey. A partnership is created between family caregivers and hospice staff that most noted for its deep compassion and caring.

Community hospices are ready to help family caregivers learn more about care options and available services. Helping patients and families during one of life's most challenging journeys is what hospice does every day.

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