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The Myths of Hospice

Hospice isn't a place, and hospice care is not just about those who are dying. Hospice is a comprehensive kind of care that focuses on living—as fully as possible, surrounded by family and friends, up until the end of life. Yet there are many myths about hospice that keep people from getting this compassionate care when they need it most.

- MYTH:** Hospice is where you go when there is nothing more a doctor can do.
FACT: Hospice is a philosophy of care providing medical, emotional, and spiritual care focusing on comfort and quality of life.
- MYTH:** Good care at the end of life is very expensive.
FACT: Medicare beneficiaries pay little or nothing for hospice, and most insurance plans, HMOs and managed care plans include hospice coverage.
- MYTH:** Hospice is only for the last few days of life.
FACT: Hospice patients and families can receive care for six months or longer, depending upon the course of the illness.
- MYTH:** Choosing hospice means giving up all medical treatment.
FACT: Hospice places the patient and family at the center of the care-planning process and provides high-quality pain management and symptom control.
- MYTH:** Everyone dies in a hospital.
FACT: Hospice goes to the patient and family at home—whether that's a private home, a nursing home or assisted living facility, or a hospice residence.
- MYTH:** Hospice is only for cancer patients.
FACT: Fifty percent of hospice patients are diagnosed with conditions other than cancer.
- MYTH:** Families are not able to care for people with terminal illnesses.
FACT: Hospice involves families, and offers them professional support and training in caring for their loved ones.
- MYTH:** Hospice is just for the elderly.
FACT: Hospice serves anyone facing a life-limiting illness, regardless of age.

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MYTH: There's no hospice in my area.

FACT: Less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries live in an area where hospice is not available.

MYTH: Hospice only focuses on the dying process.

FACT: Hospice offers grief and bereavement services to family members and the community.

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