

## Hospices

### Checklist for Selecting a Hospice

**Hospice care** is provided to terminally-ill individuals and/or their caregivers and families. Hospice beneficiaries must be under the care of a physician. Hospice services do not cure illnesses, but produce the greatest degree of relief from the symptoms of a terminal illness. Hospice services include supportive care during the dying process, as well as bereavement assistance to the family and caregivers after the death of a loved one.

Hospice services can be delivered in the home, in a licensed health care facility such as a nursing home, in a hospice residence, or in an inpatient hospice facility. An interdisciplinary team consisting of a physician, a registered nurse, clergy/counselors, volunteers and other specialists work with the terminally-ill person and his/her family or caregivers. Hospices develop a plan of care to meet the patient's care needs. Care is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Palliative care is offered by hospice agencies. Nurses provide assessments, patient and family teaching, pain management, and other services prior to end-of-life care. The service is usually free.

Questions to Ask When Comparison Shopping for Hospice Care?	Name of Agency A	Name of Agency B
1. Number of years in business as a state-licensed and Medicare certified hospice?		
2. Medicare and Medicaid certification?		
3. Is the hospice contracted with my insurance company?		
4. What are the charges for hospice services? Prescription Drugs? Respite Care?		
5. What are the charges for room and board? Since charges are not covered by Medicare, will private insurance cover the costs?		
6. If the individual does not have Medicare or Medicaid, can they receive hospice services?		
7. Can the patient's current physician continue to be involved in the patient's hospice care?		
8. Qualifications of Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nurses</li><li>• Home Care Aides</li><li>• Social Worker</li><li>• Chaplain</li><li>• Physician</li><li>• Volunteers</li><li>• Other staff</li></ul>		
9. Staff supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How is staff managed and supervised?</li><li>• How are caregivers selected?</li></ul>		

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<p>10. Skilled services provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospice</li> <li>• Skilled Nursing</li> <li>• Home Health Care</li> <li>• Light Housekeeping</li> <li>• Therapy</li> <li>• Live in (24 hour care)</li> <li>• Durable medical equipment:</li> <li>• Respite</li> </ul>		
<p>11. Non-skilled services provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companionship Visits</li> <li>• Linens and laundry</li> <li>• Dressing assistance</li> <li>• Light housekeeping</li> <li>• Meal planning and preparation</li> <li>• Medication reminders</li> <li>• Bathing, grooming, and incontinence assistance</li> <li>• Transportation to appointments</li> <li>• Escort services (outings to town)</li> <li>• Grocery Shopping</li> </ul>		
<p>12. What other services are provided, for how long and what is the charge?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palliative Care?</li> <li>• Family Grief/Support Groups?</li> <li>• Bereavement Programs?</li> <li>• Community grief/support groups?</li> </ul>		
<p>13. What type of support is available for the family/caregiver?</p>		
<p>14. What services are provided if the family/caregiver needs a break from providing ongoing care?</p>		
<p>15. What services are not covered by the Medicare Hospice benefit, Medicaid or private insurance?</p>		
<p>16. How are services provided after hours, on weekends, and holidays?</p>		
<p>17. Where is the care delivered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home of the patient</li> <li>• Inpatient Hospice Residence</li> <li>• Inpatient hospital or nursing home</li> </ul>		
<p>18. Can hospice care be provided if the individual is currently in the nursing home or assisted living?</p>		
<p>19. How often will the hospice team members visit?</p>		
<p>20. Is the patient care plan written in understandable terms?</p>		

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21. Required notice to client for schedule changes?		
22. References from agency's clients?		
23. Amount of notice required before services begin?		
24. Does the agency carry liability insurance? Is a copy of the insurance policy available for inspection?		
25. Are the staff bonded? Is a copy of the bond available for inspection?		
26. Policy on staff theft? Will insurance cover loss?		