



"In-Home Care Specialists"

Cincy Senior Corner

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Your Free Monthly Publication



PALLIATIVE vs. HOSPICE CARE - Non Clinician viewpoint

Like many, I have been hearing more and more about Palliative Care and unclear on what it is. I have been exposed to Hospice Care but the two seemed very similar. I recently attended a session which explained some of the similarities and differences; the following, after a little more research, are my take aways.

1. Palliative care is appropriate for anyone with a serious illness, whether they are expected to fully recover, to live with a chronic illness for an extended time, or to experience disease progression.
2. Although Hospice care is also palliative, the term hospice applies to care administered toward the end of life.
3. The goals of both services are similar: relief from suffering, treatment of pain and other distressing symptoms, psychological and spiritual care, and a support system to help the individual live as actively as possible along with helping the individual's family cope.
4. Palliative care services are most often provided in acute care hospitals but sometimes may be provided in the person's home as a "bridge" between traditional U.S. home care services and Hospice care.
5. In contrast over 80% of hospice care in the U.S. is provided in a patient's home with the remainder provided to patients residing in long-term care facilities or in free standing hospice residential facilities.
6. In the U.S. Palliative care services can be offered to any patient without restriction to disease or prognosis.
7. Hospice care under the Medicare Hospice Benefit, however, requires that two physicians certify that a patient has less than six months to live if the disease follows its usual course
8. Generally, Palliative care services in the US are paid by philanthropy, fee-for service mechanisms, or from direct hospital support. However, the Veteran's Administration does have a benefit for Palliative care. Palliative care does not include pharmaceuticals or medical equipment.
9. Hospice is a Medicare paid benefit that includes pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, twenty-four hour/seven day a week access to care, and support for loved ones following a death. Hospice benefits are also offered by Medicaid and most private health insurers.
10. Both services are administered by teams: Physicians, Social Workers, Nurses, Chaplains, Therapists, and Volunteers.

Our Advice: The results of a 2010 study in The New England Journal of Medicine showed that lung cancer patients receiving early Palliative care experienced less depression, increased quality of life and survived 2.7 months longer than those receiving standard oncologic care. Palliative Care is available in most Cincinnati hospitals. Talk to the hospital Social Workers about this service.

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