

# The Caregiver Toolbox

## *Navigating Series: Palliative Vs. Hospice Care*

### Palliative Care-General Definition

- Palliative care is specialized medical care that focuses on providing patients *RELIEF FROM PAIN AND OTHER SYMPTOMS OF A SERIOUS ILLNESS*, no matter the diagnosis or stage of disease.
- Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families.
- It is like a big umbrella with lots of types of care falling underneath it.
- Technically Hospice Care is a *particular type* of Palliative Care.
- However the term has started to be used to refer to care delivered in health care settings and we will use the term in that context for this material as opposed to the general definition.



### Palliative Care Vs. Hospice Care

- Most people have heard of hospice care and have a general idea of what services it can provide. What they don't know or what may become confusing is that palliative care can be both a method of administering "comfort" care and a system of services offered usually by hospitals or other medical systems.
- Both hospice and palliative care call for persons to receive care through a single program that concentrates on the person's comfort. Where palliative care programs and hospice care programs differ is in the *place of treatment, timing, and type of treatment*.

## ***Timing of Treatment***

### Palliative Care

- There are *no time restrictions*. Palliative care can be received by persons at any time, at any stage of illness whether it be terminal or not.

### Hospice

- A person must generally be considered to be *terminal or within six months of death* to be eligible for most hospice programs or to receive hospice benefits from Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurance carriers.

## ***Type of Treatment***

### Palliative Care

- Since there are no time limits on when a person can receive palliative care, it acts to fill the gap for persons who want and need comfort at any stage of any disease, whether terminal or not.
- In a palliative care program, there is no expectation that life-prolonging therapies will be avoided or stopped.

### Hospice

- The concentration is on comfort rather than aggressive disease treatment.
- Persons on hospice elect to forego or stop extensive life-prolonging treatments and concentrate on staying comfortable in the time they have left.

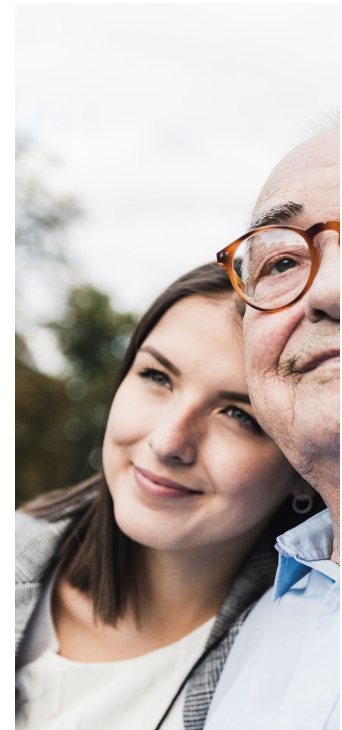
## ***Place of Treatment***

### Palliative Care

- Palliative care teams are made up of doctors, nurses, and other professional medical caregivers, often *AT the health care facility* where a person is receiving treatment for an illness or condition.
- These individuals will administer or oversee most of the ongoing comfort-care that the person will receive.

### Hospice

- Hospice care is administered in the person's home or place of residence (even in a long-term care facility).
- Hospice treatment often relies upon family caregivers, as well as a visiting hospice nurse and other professionals to keep a person as comfortable as possible.
- While a hospice program can provide care in a hospice facility, or a hospital, this is *NOT* the norm.



## Hospice Care –Eligibility

- Under Medicare, and most other insurance, people are eligible for the Hospice benefit they seem to have a life expectancy of *six months or less* if the disease runs its normal course.
- The assessment for Hospice service is FREE.
- Eligibility can be renewed if death does not occur in a six-month period. Some illnesses like Alzheimer’s disease have a list of symptoms that count as a terminal diagnosis if they are present.
  
- **Some indications that people may meet these criteria include:**
- Progressive decline in functional status despite curative treatments
- Frequent hospitalizations or emergency room visits
- Repeat or multiple infections
- Increased or uncontrolled pain
- Progressive/profound weakness and fatigue
- Shortness of breath with or without oxygen
- Dependency (needs assistance in activities of daily living)
- Alterations in mental status
- Weight loss

## Typical Kinds of Services of Hospice

Generally someone must enroll in a Hospice program which is listed as a provider for either Medicare or the insurance company. **Important:** Medicare and other insurance companies will still pay for covered benefits for any health problems that aren’t related to the terminal illness, such as care for an injury.

### **Medicare and most insurance cover the following hospice services:**

- Doctor services and Nursing care
- Medical equipment (such as wheelchairs or walkers)
- Medical supplies (such as bandages and catheters)
- Drugs for symptom control or pain relief
- Hospice aide and homemaker services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Speech-language pathology services
- Social worker services
- Dietary counseling
- Grief and loss counseling for person and the family
- Short-term inpatient care (for pain and symptom management)
- Short-term respite care
- Any other Medicare(or insurance)-covered services needed to manage pain and other symptoms related to the terminal illness, as recommended by the hospice team

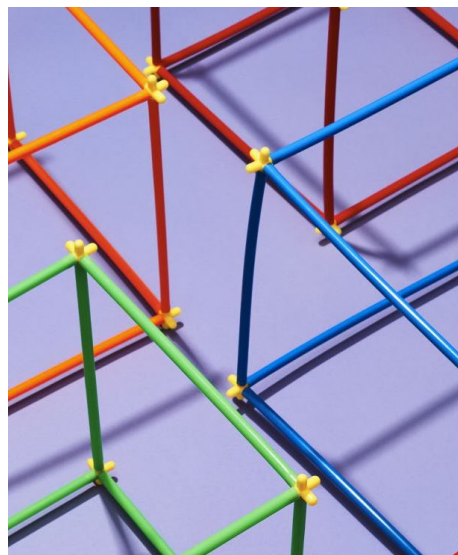
## What Is Not Generally Covered in Hospice?

When someone chooses hospice care, they have decided that they no longer want care to cure their terminal illness and/or their doctor has determined that efforts to cure the illness aren't working. Medicare and most insurance will ***not*** cover any of the following once someone chooses hospice care:

- Treatment intended to cure the terminal illness.
- Prescription drugs to cure the illness (rather than for symptom control or pain relief).
- Care from any hospice provider that wasn't set up by the hospice medical team.
- Room and board--Medicare and other insurance doesn't cover room and board if someone gets hospice care in their home or if they live in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or a group home.
- Care in an emergency room, inpatient facility care, or ambulance transportation, unless it's either arranged by the hospice team or is unrelated to the terminal illness.

### Helpful Websites

- [www.coaaa.org](http://www.coaaa.org)  
(Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging)
- [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- [www.proseniors.org](http://www.proseniors.org)
- [www.disabilityrightsohio.org](http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org)



## **This information is provided by: The National Family Caregiver Support Program**



This is a nationally funded program operated in Central Ohio by the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA). It offers caregiver workshops and funds services designed to assist caregivers on a short term basis. The services include: information and assistance, counseling, respite, and other supplemental services.

### **Request a copy or download our other guides:**

- Central Ohio Older Adults Resource Guide
- The Caregiver Toolbox
- Central Ohio Long Term Care & Hospice Guide
- Central Ohio Housing & Home Repair Guide
- Central Ohio Private Homecare Guide
- Central Ohio Utility Guide
- Central Ohio Prescription Guide
- Central Ohio Transportation Guide
- Central Ohio Support Group Guide
- Central Ohio Respite Guide
- Central Ohio Moving & Transitions Guide
- Books, Videos, and Websites for Family Caregivers.
- Central Ohio Kinship Care Guide (New)
- Central Ohio Hiring Guide for In Home Caregivers ( New)
- Central Ohio Pet Care Guide (New)

**The COAAA also provides monthly Caregiver Support Groups & Information Sessions. For more information, call 1-800-589-7277 or visit [www.coaaa.org](http://www.coaaa.org).**

**Or in your county, call one of these agencies:**

- **Delaware**-SourcePoint 740-363-6677
- **Fairfield**-Meals on Wheels Older of Fairfield County 740-681-5050
- **Fayette**-Community Action Commission of Fayette Co. 740-335-7282
- **Franklin**-Franklin Co. Office on Aging 614-525-6200
- **Licking**-Licking Co. Aging Program 740-345-0821 or 1-800-452-0097
- **Madison**-Madison Co. Senior Center 740-852-3001
- **Pickaway**-Pickaway County Senior Center 740-474-8831
- **Union**-Union County Senior Services 937-644-1010