



*Family and patient guide*

 **Caring for Life**

Hospice Family Care • The Caring House



## Words of Welcome

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of you and your loved ones.

Caring for Life has an entire team of experienced professionals to support you and your loved ones during your journey. It is our desire to make your journey not one you walk along but one where you have Caring for Life there to walk with you.

Our name, Caring for Life, symbolizes our heart and service to the greater Huntsville community while letting you know where we invest our passion. We are still the same team that has remained the only not-for-profit provider in the Huntsville area since 1979. You may know us by our previous names over the years, Huntsville Hospice or Hospice Family Care. In addition to providing the most comprehensive end-of-life care in the region for adults and children, Caring for Life also offers The Caring House, a bereavement program for children who have lost loved ones, regardless of the circumstances. We hope to continue to expand our services under Caring for Life without changing our mission and values as YOUR community-based provider. All that we have done and will do is thanks to the generosity of hundreds of community members, volunteers and families we have had the honor to serve making our mission possible to provide excellent, compassionate end-of-life care for those touched illness, grief, and loss.

This guide is full of helpful information, please know that our Caring for Life team is always available. If you have any questions, we want you to know that there is no question too small, so please do not hesitate to ask us.

Our sincere wish is to make this time in your life easier on you and your family as you become part of our family.

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*On the cover: "Pond Garden in the Summer," an original oil painting by Huntsville artist Helen Vaughn. Her work can be found throughout the Caring for Life inpatient facility.*

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## Caring for Life Overview

Established in 1979, Hospice Family Care is Madison County's original and only not-for-profit hospice. In 2013, Hospice Family Care joined the Huntsville Hospital Health System. As one team, Caring for Life and Huntsville Hospital are committed to providing compassionate, quality end-of-life care to our patients and their families. Together, we were able to build this region's first inpatient hospice facility on the campus of Redstone Village in Huntsville.

With the addition of this facility, Hospice Family Care soon recognized that name no longer reflected the breath of services provided to the greater Huntsville community. Thus, Caring for Life, was developed in 2019. This name, as you will see throughout this orientation booklet, serves as an umbrella for the outpatient and inpatient hospice services provided by Hospice Family Care and the grief support services provided by The Caring House.

It is our hope as a team that we can deliver the excellent, compassionate end-of-life care that every patient and their family deserves. To deliver on that promise, not only do we strive every day to provide the best possible patient care, but we also serve as a leading community educator to physicians, spiritual congregations, schools, businesses, social groups, and individuals on topics related to end-of-life care, symptom management, advanced care planning, legacy planning, grief and bereavement, and living well with life limiting illness. Let us know how our free education seminars can serve those you care about.

### Our Mission

To provide excellent, compassionate end-of-life care for those touched by illness, grief and loss.

### Our Vision

To be the premier hospice and palliative care provider in North Alabama.

### Our Values

Integrity, Excellence, Innovation, Accountability, Compassion and Safety

### Location

**10000 Serenity Lane  
Huntsville, Alabama 35803**

**(256) 650-1212  
Fax (256) 880-2929**

Regular business office hours  
Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

After hours a nurse can be reached by calling **(256) 650-1212**.

# Hospice Care

Hospice is a type of medical care that can be beneficial to patients at the end of life and their families. Hospice focuses on comfort and quality of life. Our Hospice Family Care team offers compassion, comfort, and quality care when curative therapies are no longer effective in treating a life-limiting illness. Our hospice team will manage the symptoms of your illness where the focus is on your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Hospice care can be provided in various settings including private homes, hospitals, independent-living, assisted-living, contracted nursing facilities, as well as our own Hospice Family Care Inpatient Facility. The exceptional care our team provides to each of our patients and families is developed on an individualized basis.

Hospice does not hasten or postpone death. Rather, we specialize in the holistic, core approach so you and your family may live this last stage of your life as fully as you can. Our goal is to make each day the best that it can be.

Our Hospice Family Care team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, spiritual support, hospice aides, and volunteers. Working closely with you and your family we create a plan of care which focuses uniquely on easing your pain whether it is physical, emotional, social, or spiritual and enhancing your quality of life.

Your plan of care is developed based on your input as well as that of your family, attending physician, medical director, and the Hospice Family Care team. It is individualized to your goals as well as the goals of your family.

Patients are eligible for hospice care when your physician and the hospice medical director make a clinical determination that, if the disease follows its usual course, the life expectancy is six months or less. The clinical decision consists of professional judgment, CMS regulations, and local coverage.

## Levels of Hospice Care

Throughout your care, we will work together with you and your loved ones to decide which of the four levels of hospice care is necessary.

### *Routine Home Care*

Routine Care is typically offered in the privacy of a patient's home. This care can also be delivered in independent living, assisted-living or skilled nursing facilities, as well as in group homes. This type of hospice care is a team effort which is collaborated on weekly so we can give our patients the best care that is specific to their needs. Routine Care visits are usually done during regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, we are a 24/7-hospice, meaning we are available to meet your needs at any time, day or night.

### *Respite Care*

Respite Care is provided to help give relief for caregivers. This type of care can be offered to our patients for a maximum of five sequential days in our inpatient facility or a contracted skilled nursing facility. This type of care can be very beneficial to our patient's caregiver when they become tired and overwhelmed.

### *Continuous Home Care*

Continuous Care is thorough, short-term care performed in the home. This type of care is to attain management of acute medical symptoms. When Continuous Care is performed, it is intended for periods of crisis so that care can continue in your home.

### *General Inpatient Care*

General Inpatient Care, sometimes referred to as GIP care, is delivered in our Hospice Family Care inpatient facility. It can also be provided in a specific hospital or contracted skilled nursing facility. This level of care is intensive and is intended for short-term care aiming for management of acute medical symptoms by your Hospice Family Care team. This type of care is provided when a patient requires a greater degree of monitoring in order to stabilize and manage their acute medical symptoms. Once your symptoms are managed, Hospice Family Care will return you to your home or a living situation that best meets your needs.

## Hospice Care Benefit

In most cases, hospice care is covered by your health insurance plan. Hospice Family Care will confirm your benefit by contacting your insurance company. Usually, the insurance company pays Hospice Family Care directly for our services. Any treatment performed outside of the plan of care, without authorization of Hospice Family Care, may result in you being responsible for payment of such treatment. An example of this would be contacting emergency services or 911 prior to contacting Hospice Family Care staff.

Hospice Family Care is a not-for-profit program and no patient is denied care because of their inability to pay.

## Electing Your Hospice Benefit

In order to elect your hospice benefit, you first need to complete a “Hospice Family Care Election of Hospice Benefit and Consent for Treatment” form. Your treatment, approved by the attending physician and performed by the hospice team, can only be started once this form is completed. This form will also give consent for release of information regarding your medical record, which is kept strictly confidential and is protected by federal law.

## Transfer, Discharge and Revocation

Patients sometimes transfer or discharge from our services for one of the following reasons:

- Patient’s condition improves to a point that the patient is considered to have an extended prognosis that is greater than six months.
- Patient/family fails to abide by the agreed upon plan of care.
- Patient moves out of the Hospice Family Care service area.
- Patient enters a non-contracted facility.
- Patient or staff’s safety or welfare becomes affected through a situation that cannot be resolved.
- Patient chooses to stop receiving hospice care for any reason, including seeking aggressive treatment for their condition.

Should one of these situations arise, you will be given as much advance notice as possible, except in the case of emergency. We will provide you with the information necessary for your care after hospice.

It is your choice to “Elect the Hospice Benefit”, and you are also allowed to revoke or remove hospice services at any time. In order for this to happen, you must sign a revocation form which will terminate your hospice benefit. Your hospice care cannot be terminated verbally — you must sign the revocation form. As soon as a revocation form has been signed, your insurance plan will return the coverage you had prior.

You may re-elect your hospice benefit after a discharge or revocation as long as you remain eligible.

## Additional Services

Other services offered by Hospice Family Care may include:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Massage therapy
- Dietary and nutritional counseling
- Nail care (provided by a certified nail care specialist)
- Music Therapy

*These are available if they are in line with hospice philosophy and goals.*

## Your Hospice Care Team

Your Hospice Family Care team is comprised of a hospice physician, your attending physician, a registered nurse, social worker, spiritual support, hospice aide, and volunteer. We work together to provide you with the best care to meet your physical, emotional and spiritual needs during this time. We believe in a holistic approach to end-of-life care.

### ***Hospice Family Care Physician***

Hospice Family Care physicians or medical directors provide pain and symptom management expertise. A hospice physician may visit you in your home if needed.

### ***Attending Physician***

Patients will decide who their attending physician will be while in hospice care. This attending physician can be your primary care physician or the Hospice medical director. Your attending physician is responsible for admitting you to our hospice services, prescribing medications, and coordinating your care with the hospice team.

### ***Nurse Practitioner***

A nurse practitioner may visit you in your home periodically to provide documentation related to your diagnosis.

### ***Nurse***

The registered nurse case manager assigned to you will be your primary nurse and organize your care. This nurse will see you regularly and communicate with your attending physician regarding any change in your condition as well as any needs you might have. Education will be provided to you and your family on what to expect as your disease advances. As a team, we will monitor your pain to help relieve it and any additional symptoms that may arise. When your primary nurse is unavailable, there will be on-call nurses to see to your care. There will always be a nurse available to you.

### ***Social Worker***

Social workers can help patients and family members cope with the grief and stress that is common when facing a life-limiting illness. Some of the ways a social worker can help include emotional support and help in coping with stress; using community resources to help as needed; organizing volunteer services; planning discharge from our inpatient facility; planning funeral arrangements; and providing help with completing a living will and/or durable power of attorney for health care

### ***Spiritual Support***

We respect your individual beliefs and recognize the diverse cultures within this community, and we encourage you to exercise your personal values and belief system, provided it does not interfere with the well-being of others. If you desire, Hospice Family Care will make all reasonable efforts to facilitate visits by local clergy, pastoral counselors, or other individuals who can support your spiritual needs to the best of our ability.

### ***Hospice Aide***

Hospice aide services are offered upon admission, but you can request their assistance at any time by letting your primary nurse know. Your hospice aide can assist with personal care needs, which can include but are not restricted to bathing, hair and skin care, shaving, dressing, linen changes, positioning, and assisting with meals.

### ***Hospice Volunteers***

Volunteers are available to help in many ways at the patient and family's request. Each volunteer is specially trained and has a health screening and background check completed before they are allowed to volunteer. If you have a need for volunteer support, please notify any member of your hospice team.



# Hospice Volunteers

## Community Care Team

Volunteers are a vital part of the Caring for Life team. They have been caring for individuals and families like you since our inception in 1979. That is why we refer to them as the Community Care Team.

Each volunteer must submit an application and two reference letters before being interviewed. Once selected, they must pass a background check, drug and health screening, and complete orientation and training. We employ a volunteer coordinator to tailor and supervise a volunteer care plan just for you.

The following are just some of the services volunteers may provide. Your admissions team will provide you with a form to select the services that interest you.

*\*Services and schedules depend on volunteer availability*

### **Companion**

Routine friendly visits are available to provide social and emotional support, as well as adapting your interests and hobbies to increase quality of life. These volunteers also offer support to families by providing respite to caregivers and support with activities such as errands, meal prep, cooking, minor cleaning, or just to keep you company.

If you enjoy the company of pets, we have partnered with Therapy Partners, Inc. to provide companionship from certified and trained therapy animals.

### **Vigil Volunteer**

Companion volunteers with specialized training provide peace and comfort to those preparing to transition from this life. These volunteers can help patients “tell their stories,” by turning conversations into keepsake recordings and eternal legacies. These volunteers can also aid patients and families in creating a Transition Plan to ensure the patient’s final moments honor the patient’s life, while preparing families with meaningful tasks. If you would like additional support, these volunteers are available to provide respite and support, day or night.

### **Helping Hands**

Do you wish you had an extra pair of hands? Helping Hands volunteers are here to ensure the little things don’t overwhelm you. These volunteers can assist with errands, housework, haircuts, lawn care, dog walking, moving furniture, and more.

### **Bereavement Support**

These volunteers provide social and emotional support for adults and children who have experienced grief and loss. With guidance from the bereavement coordinator, these volunteers help ensure families are cared for 13 months after a death.

### **Volunteer Guidelines**

To ensure the safety and comfort of both patients and volunteers, we ask our volunteers to refrain from the following:

- Lifting patients
- Transporting patients or families anywhere in a vehicle
- Personal care such as toileting, bathing, or changing
- Feeding a patient (though meal prep is allowed)
- Delivery of medications
- Changing out durable medical equipment
- Administration of any medication, including oxygen and over the counter items

If you do decide to use one of our trusted volunteers to assist with shopping or errands that require the exchange of funds, consider documenting the amount you give and receive with a volunteer signature to ensure there is no confusion.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **When is the right time to ask about hospice?**

Now is the best time to learn more about hospice and ask questions about what to expect from hospice services. Although end-of-life care may be difficult to discuss, it is best for family members to share their wishes long before it becomes a concern. This can greatly reduce stress when the time for hospice is needed. By having these discussions in advance, patients are not forced into uncomfortable situations. Instead, patients can make an educated decision that includes the advice and input of family members and loved ones.

## **How does hospice care begin?**

Typically, hospice care starts as soon as a formal request or a 'referral' is made by the patient's doctor. Often a hospice program representative will make an effort to visit the patient within 48 hours of that referral, providing the visit meets the needs and schedule of the patient and family/primary caregiver. Usually, hospice care is ready to begin within a day or two of the referral. However, in urgent situations, hospice services may begin sooner.

## **Will I be the only hospice patient that the hospice staff serves?**

Every hospice patient has access to a hospice volunteer, registered nurse, social worker, home health aide, and chaplain (also known as the interdisciplinary team). For each patient and family, the interdisciplinary team writes a care plan with the patient/family that is used to make sure the patient and family receive the care they need from the team. Typically, full-time registered nurses provide care to about a dozen different families. Social workers usually work with about twice the number of patients/families as nurses. If needed, home health aides, who provide personal care to the patient, will visit most frequently.

All visits, however, are based on the patient and family needs as described in the care plan and the condition of the patient during the course of illness. The frequency of volunteers and spiritual care is often dependent upon the family request and the availability of these services. Travel requirements and other factors may cause some variation in how many patients each hospice staff serves.

## **Is hospice available after hours?**

Hospice care is available 'on-call' after the administrative office has closed, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Most hospices have nurses available to respond to a call for help within minutes, if necessary. Some hospice programs have chaplains and social workers on call as well.

## **How does the hospice work to keep the patient comfortable?**

Many patients may have pain and other serious symptoms as illness progresses. Hospice staff receives special training to care for all types of physical and emotional symptoms that cause pain, discomfort and distress. Because keeping the patient comfortable and pain-free is an important part of hospice care, many hospice programs have developed ways to measure how comfortable the patient is during the course of their stay in hospice. Hospice staff works with the patient's physician to make sure that medication, therapies, and procedures are designed to achieve the goals outlined in the patient's care plan. The care plan is reviewed frequently to make sure any changes and new goals are in the plan.

### **What role does the hospice volunteer serve?**

Hospice volunteers are generally available to provide different types of support to patients and their loved ones including running errands, preparing light meals, staying with a patient to give family members a break, and lending emotional support and companionship to patients and family members.

Because hospice volunteers spend time in patients' and families' homes, each hospice program generally has an application and interview process to assure the person is right for this type of volunteer work. In addition, hospice programs have an organized training program for their patient care volunteers. Areas covered by these training programs often include understanding hospice, confidentiality, working with families, listening skills, signs and symptoms of approaching death, loss and grief and bereavement support.

### **Can I be cared for by hospice if I reside in a nursing facility or other type of long-term care facility?**

Hospice services can be provided to a terminally ill person wherever they live. This means a patient living in a nursing facility or long-term care facility can receive specialized visits from hospice nurses, home health aides, chaplains, social workers, and volunteers, in addition to other care and services provided by the nursing facility. The hospice and the nursing home will have a written agreement in place in order for the hospice to serve residents of the facility.

### **What happens if I cannot stay at home due to my increasing care need and require a different place to stay during my final phase of life?**

A growing number of hospice programs have their own hospice facilities or have arrangements with freestanding hospice houses, hospitals or inpatient residential centers to care for patients who cannot stay where they usually live. These patients may require a different place to live during this phase of their life when they need extra care. However, care in these settings is not covered under the Medicare or Medicaid Hospice Benefit. It is best to find out, well before hospice may be needed, if insurance or any other payer covers this type of care or if patients/families will be responsible for payment.

### **Do state and federal reviewers inspect and evaluate hospices?**

Yes. There are state licensure requirements that must be met by hospice programs in order for them to deliver care. In addition, hospices must comply with federal regulations in order to be approved for reimbursement under Medicare. Hospices must periodically undergo inspection to be sure they are meeting regulatory standards in order to maintain their license to operate and the certification that permits Medicare reimbursement.

### **How can I be sure that quality hospice care is provided?**

Many hospices use tools to let them see how well they are doing in relation to quality hospice standards. In addition, most programs use family satisfaction surveys to get feedback on the performance of their programs. To help hospice programs in making sure they give quality care and service, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization has developed recommended standards entitled 'Standards of Practice for Hospice Programs' as one way of ensuring quality.

There are also voluntary accreditation organizations that evaluate hospice programs to protect consumers. These organizations survey hospices to see whether they are providing care that meets defined quality standards. These reviews consider the customary practices of the hospice, such as policies and procedures, medical records, personal records, evaluation studies, and in many cases also include visits to patients and families currently under care of that hospice program. A hospice program may volunteer to obtain accreditation from one of these organizations.

# Inpatient Facility Guidelines

## Respite and General Inpatient Care

The inpatient facility provides short-term hospice and respite care with 24-hour medical attention for symptom management.

## Emergencies

All Caring for Life staff have been trained for emergency situations at the Inpatient Facility. If an emergency does occur, please **stay calm** and follow the directions of the staff. Exit routes are posted throughout the hallways in the inpatient facility.

## Medications

Our nursing staff is responsible for administering all medication. Please make sure to review all medications with your nurse. Current medications should be brought from home to ensure continuity. The hospice physician or nurse practitioner will determine which medications will be continued to best manage your comfort goals.

## Resuscitation Measures

Advance directives will be discussed at the time of admission. Our staff will discuss your preferences and options with you and your caregiver. You have the right to change your preferences at any time. Should resuscitation be requested, we will call 911, and you will be transported to the hospital's emergency department for treatment.

## Personal Belongings

We want your environment to feel like home. You are more than welcome to bring personal items to have in your room. All items that you bring into the facility are considered your responsibility, and Caring for Life is not responsible for any of these items.

## Visitors

We encourage and welcome visits from family members and friends at any time. Children must be under adult supervision at all times. When arriving, please sign in at the Welcome Desk or Nurses Station.

## Overnight Guests

Each patient room has a sofa that unfolds into a bed and a recliner provided for guests. Please notify staff if you need an additional blanket or pillow. Cots are also available on request.

## Meals

All meals are provided for patients at the Inpatient Facility. Our family kitchen and vending machines are available for visitors to purchase snacks and/or perform light cooking.

## Telephones

Every patient room is equipped with a telephone. To get an outside line, you must dial "9" first.

**Smoking**

For the health and safety of all our patients, family members, and visitors, the Hospice Inpatient Facility and The Caring House are smoke-free campuses. In addition, smoking is not permitted in the parking lots.

**Laundry**

Bed linens and towels are provided.

**Pets**

We acknowledge that pets are valued family members. Caregivers may bring your dogs or cats for short visits to the Inpatient Facility after providing documentation of current vaccinations. All animals must be supervised at all times, remain on a leash and clean.

**Leaving the Facility**

Leaving the unit must be discussed and approved by the hospice physician and/ or charge nurse. If you are using the respite benefit and have assistance from a caregiver, you may briefly leave the facility. We ask that you notify the inpatient facility immediately if you are unable to return.

**Alcoholic Beverages**

Alcoholic beverages may only be consumed on the premises as directed by the physician as part of the patient's care plan.

**Illegal Drugs & Weapons**

Caring for Life has a zero tolerance policy for illegal drugs or paraphernalia on the facility premises. Weapons are not allowed on Huntsville Hospital property.

# Caregiver Guide

It is vital for caregivers to maintain their health. Adopting healthy mindsets and habits help caregivers stay healthy and able to continue to provide for the patient's needs. The responsibilities of caregivers are numerous and can be overwhelming, especially when accompanied by the emotional stress of grief. Hospice strives to support and teach caregivers ways to make their role easier. The role of a caregiver can be difficult sometimes. Hospice is available as a support and guide. Caregivers may experience periods of anger, depression, denial, frustration, grief, loneliness, and anxiety. Through sharing these feelings of hurt, one becomes aware that the hurt does not cease, but the load may become lighter.

Caregivers need to accept offers of help from family, friends and the hospice team. They need rest, a good diet, and time to take a break from the constant reminder of their loved one's illness. Please realize it is very healthy for caregivers to ask questions of the team and to ask for help. To the caregivers, the team expresses sincere support. Be well assured that hospice is ready and willing to walk this journey with you.

## Hand Washing and Infection Control

Hand hygiene saves lives. Hand hygiene includes:

- Washing hands with soap and water.
- Cleansing hands using an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Preventing the spread of germs and infections.

### Why should I practice hand hygiene?

1. To prevent hospital infections.
  - In the United States, hospital patients get nearly 2 million infections each year. That's about 1 infection per 20 patients!
  - Infections you get in the hospital can be hard to treat, and could be life threatening.
  - All patients are at risk for hospital infections.
  - You can take action by cleaning your hands often and by asking both your health care providers and visitors to wash their hands.
2. To make a difference in your own health.

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infections, including the common cold, flu, and even hard-to-treat infections such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.

### When should I practice hand hygiene?

You should practice hand hygiene:

- Before preparing or eating food.
- Before touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Before and after changing wound dressings or bandages.
- After using the restroom.
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- After touching hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls or the phone.

Health care providers should practice hand hygiene:

- Every time they enter your room or before they touch you.
- Before putting on gloves. Wearing gloves alone is not enough to prevent the spread of infection.
- After removing gloves.

## How do I practice hand hygiene?

### With soap and water:

1. Wet your hands with warm water. Use liquid soap if possible. Apply a nickel- or quarter-sized amount of soap to your hands.
2. Rub your hands together until soap forms a lather and then rub all over the top of your hands, in between your fingers, wrists and the area around and under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing your hands for 15 seconds. Need a timer? Sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper towel if possible. Then use your paper towel to turn off the faucet and to open the door if needed.

### With an alcohol-based hand rub:

1. Follow directions on the bottle for how much of the product to use.
2. Rub hands together and then rub product all over the top of your hands, in between your fingers, wrists and the area around and under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing until your hands are dry. If enough rub was used to kill germs, it should take at least 15 seconds of rubbing before your hands feel dry. You should not rinse your hands with water or dry them with a towel.

## Which hand hygiene should I use?

### Use soap and water:

- When your hands look dirty.
- After you use the restroom.
- Before you eat or prepare food.

### Use an alcohol-based rub:

- When your hands do not look dirty.
- If soap and water are not available.

Alcohol-based rubs are fast-acting and convenient products that kill germs on the hands, containing 60-95% ethanol or isopropanol (types of alcohol).

## Who should practice hand hygiene?

You can make a difference in your own health. Health care providers know they should practice hand hygiene, but sometimes they forget. We welcome your friendly reminder. Ask health care providers to practice hand hygiene in a polite way. Tell them that you know how easy it is for people to get infections in the hospital and that you don't want it to happen to you.

## Hand hygiene is the #1 way to prevent the spread of infections.

**Why?** You can take action by practicing hand hygiene regularly and by asking those around you to practice it as well.

**When?** You and your loved ones should clean your hands very often, especially after touching objects or surfaces in the hospital room, before eating, and after using the restroom. Your health care provider should practice hand hygiene every time he/she enters your room or touches you.

**How?** It only takes 15 seconds of using either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub to kill the germs that cause infections.

**Which?** Use soap and water when your hands look dirty; otherwise, you can use an alcohol-based hand rub.

**Who?** You, your loved ones, and your health care providers should practice hand hygiene.

*Adapted from Hand Hygiene Saves Lives, Centers for Disease Control*

# Bereavement Guide

## Death

When death occurs, please contact Caring for Life. We consider it an honor and privilege to care for the body at time of death. A nurse will come to your home, to confirm the absence of vital signs. The nurse will handle contacting physicians, funeral homes, and any other individuals you would like. It is our standard that the nurse will provide or assist the family in preparing the body for the funeral home. Caring for Life will also give instructions on medication disposal and arrange pick up of any medical equipment. Our staff, spiritual support and volunteers are here to support you during this time.

For more information regarding death please reference the book, *Gone From My Sight*.

## Grief Support Services

Death can be a painful and permanent loss experience, and one of the hardest from which to recover. Death takes away, but facing it and grieving can result in peace, new strengths and purpose. Hospice Family Care offers a variety of grief support services lead by employees and trained volunteers. If you have any questions please call Hospice Family Care for more information.

## Grief Support Groups

Unless otherwise noted, all groups are held at the Caring House.  
203 Longwood Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35801.

## ADULT BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

Please visit [hhcaringforlife.org](http://hhcaringforlife.org) for support group information.

## Bereavement Program

Caring for Life offers support and bereavement care to those who have had a loved one die in our service. We recognize the importance of not only caring for our patients during their time with us, but we also want to care for the patients' family members. We will periodically reach out to you by mail or phone for 13 months after the death of your loved one. A yearly service of remembrance is held to honor those that we cared for.





When a family member or close friend dies, it is a frightening disruption in the lives of both children and adults. Death changes the way the entire family functions. Sometimes our children become “the forgotten mourners.”

The Caring House provides a safe place for children ages 3-18 and their families to cope with the death of a loved one and share their grief with others. We recognize that grief is a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one. The duration and intensity of grief is unique for each individual. Within each of us is the natural capacity to heal, and acceptance and caring facilitate that healing process.

### **What Happens at The Caring House**

At The Caring House, we provide many outlets for children to express and process their grief, including:

- Physical and creative play
- At The Caring House Art expression
- Sharing and listening
- Expressing feelings
- Learning about the grieving process

### **How Do I Get These Services**

To request a telephone consultation for The Caring House program, please call (256) 650-1212. After a brief telephone interview, we will arrange a tour and orientation visit where dates and times for participation in the program will be determined.

### **Who Pays For These Services**

Caring for Life is a not-for-profit organization, and services of The Caring House are available free of charge. We are dependent on Huntsville Hospital Foundation support, corporate and community contributions, as well as donations from churches and families who have benefited from our services. All residents of Madison County are eligible for our services, regardless of whether their loved one was served by our hospice agency. If you would like to make a contribution to Caring for Life or The Caring House, please call our office at (256) 650-1212. All gifts to Caring for Life are tax deductible and very much appreciated.

### **Additional Services**

- Seminars and professional training for recognizing the signs of grief in children
- Educational resource center
- Tours of The Caring House
- On-site support for grief in the workplace
- Age appropriate in-class activities to facilitate grief work in children
- Crisis and school intervention

### **NAGC**

The Caring House is a member of the National Alliance for Grieving Children.

### **For more information**

**(256) 650-1212** | [hccaringforlife.org/caring-house](http://hccaringforlife.org/caring-house)

# COMPLIANCE

## Drug Disposal Guidelines and Locations

The following guidelines were developed to encourage the proper disposal of medicines and help reduce harm from accidental exposure or intentional misuse after they are no longer needed:

- Follow any specific disposal instructions on the prescription drug labeling or patient information that accompanies the medicine. Do not flush medicines down the sink or toilet unless this information specifically instructs you to do so.
- Take advantage of programs that allow the public to take unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal. Call your local law enforcement agencies to see if they sponsor medicine take-back programs in your community. Contact your city's or county government's household trash and recycling service to learn about medication disposal options and guidelines for your area.
- Transfer unused medicines to collectors registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Authorized sites may be retail, hospital or clinic pharmacies, and law enforcement locations. Some offer mail-back programs or collection receptacles ("drop-boxes").

Visit the DEA's website ([www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/index.html](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/index.html)) or call 1-800-882-9539 for more information and to find an authorized collector in your community

## Compliance Hotline

You and your family are very important to us! Please ask questions if something is unclear regarding our services or the care you receive. Our agency conducts evaluations by mail. These surveys allow us to continually evaluate and improve our services.

During your stay, the doctors, nurses and staff of Caring for Life will treat you and your family as partners in your own care. One important way that you can be involved is to speak up. Ask questions, voice your concerns and don't be afraid to raise any issues relating not only to your care and treatment, but also to overall services.

**Speak up:** Ask questions and voice concerns. It's your body, and you have a right to know.

**Pay attention:** Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medicines.

**Educate yourself:** Learn about the medical tests you get and your treatment plan.

**Find an advocate:** Pick a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate or support person.

**What meds and why:** Know what medicines you take, why you take them and their possible side effects.

**Participate in your care:** You are the center of the health care team.

**Write down any questions you have.**

Excellence is our goal! All patient concerns or complaints will be handled courteously and promptly. If at any time you have a question or concern you may:

1. Call (256) 650-1212 and ask to speak to your nurse.
2. If your needs remain unmet, please contact Caring for Life (256) 650-1212 and ask to speak to our manager of compliance.
3. You may also send direct correspondence to:

Caring for Life  
10000 Serenity Lane  
Huntsville, AL 35803  
[hhcaringforlife.org](http://hhcaringforlife.org)

The patient or family member will be advised immediately of subsequent action taken in response to a concern or complaint. Patient and family members also have the right to access the following governmental agencies:

**Alabama Department of Public Health – (800) 356-9596**  
**Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services – (404) 562-7150**

# NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Caring for Life complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Hospice Family Care does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

## Caring for Life provides

- Free services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:  
Qualified sign language interpreters
- Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as: Qualified Interpreters
- Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact Hospice Family Care.

If you believe that Caring for Life has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with:

Sonia Bradford, Manager of Compliance,  
Caring for Life  
10000 Serenity Lane, Huntsville, AL 35803

**(256) 650-1212** or fax (256) 880-2929 · [sonia.bradford@hospicefamilycare.org](mailto:sonia.bradford@hospicefamilycare.org)

**(888) 765-7408** Compliance Hotline

You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, Sonia Bradford is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at

<https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>

## or by mail or phone

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F  
HHH Building Washington, D.C. 20201

**1-800-368-1019**, 800-537-7697 (TDD) | Complaint forms available at [www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html).

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1 (256) 533-0655.

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1 (256) 533-0655.

주의: 한국어를 사용하지는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1 (256) 533-0655 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1 (256) 533-0655。

ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1 (256) 533-0655.

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1 (256) 533-0655.

تحدثت ذلك إذا ملاحظتة خدمات فإن اللغة، اذكر اللغوية المساعدة بالمجان لك تتوافر . برقم اتصل 1 (256) 533-0655 والبركم الصدم هافنة

ध्यान दाय: यद्यद आप ढहदी बोलते ह ढतो आपके लिए मुफ्त मड भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हड 1 (256) 533-0655 पर कॉल करड।

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1 (256) 533-0655.

KUMBUKA: Ikiwa unazungumza Kiswahili, unaweza kupata, huduma za lugha, bila malipo. Piga simu 1 (256) 533-0655

ढयु-नः ङे तढे ढङरती ढोवता ढे, तो नः ढङकु ढाषा सडाय सेवाओ तढारा ढाटढ ढपवढ्ढ ङ. ढेन करे 1 (256) 533-0655.

注意事項: 日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援をご利用いただけます。1 (256) 533-0655まで、お電話にてご連絡ください。

ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero 1 (256) 533-0655.

ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 1 (256) 533-0655.

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 1 (256) 533-0655.

# PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As providers, we have an obligation to protect the rights of our patients and explain these rights to you before care begins. Your caregiver may exercise these rights for you in the event that you are not competent to exercise them yourself. It is your right to be given information about your rights and responsibilities for receiving care and services in a language you can understand, including the agency's mission, philosophy, or limitation in the scope of services.

## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

**Dignity and respect** - to not be discriminated against based on social status, political belief, sexual preference, race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or handicap. Both patient and caregiver have a right to mutual respect and dignity, including respect for property. Our staff is discouraged from accepting gifts and prohibited from borrowing from you. You have the right to be free from mistreatment, neglect, or verbal, mental, sexual, and physical abuse, including injuries of unknown source, and misappropriation of patient property by our employees.

**Ethical standards and conduct** - to have a relationship with our staff that is based on honesty and ethical standards of conduct.

**Settle complaints** - to be informed of the procedure to follow to settle complaints about the care that is, or should have been furnished, and regarding a lack of respect for property. You also have the right to know about the outcome of such complaints.

**No reprisals** - to voice grievances without fear of discrimination or reprisal for having done so.

**State hotline** - the telephone number for the state's "Hotline" which receives complaints or questions about local agencies is: (800) 356-9596.

## DECISION MAKING – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

**Information about your care** - to be notified about the frequency of the services that are proposed to be furnished, and to know the names and responsibilities of the disciplines providing your care. You also have the right to receive information about the services covered under the hospice benefit and about the scope of services that we will provide and specific limitations on those services.

**Be notified of changes to your care** - to be advised of any change in your plan of care before the change is made.

**Plan your care** - to actively participate in the planning of your care and in planning changes in the care, and to be advised that you have the right to do so. You also have the right to choose your attending physician.

**Accept or refuse treatment** - to be informed in writing of your rights under state law to make decisions concerning medical care, including your right to accept or refuse treatment and to be given information concerning the consequences of your decisions, and your right to formulate advance directives.

**Implement advance directives** - to be informed in writing of advance directives.

**Compliance with your wishes** - to have health care providers comply with advance directives in accordance with state laws.

**Receive care without conditions** - to receive care without condition or discrimination based on the execution of advance directives.

**Refuse services** - to refuse services without fear of reprisal or discrimination. However, should you refuse to comply with the plan of care and your refusal threatens to compromise our commitment to quality care, then we or your physician may be forced to refer you to another source of care.

## **PRIVACY – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

**Confidentiality** - to have a confidential medical record. Please refer to our Notice of Privacy Practices for more information.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

**Insurance information** - to be informed of the extent to which payment may be expected from Medicare, Medicaid, or any other payor known to us before any care is delivered.

## **QUALITY OF CARE – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

**Receive high quality care** - to receive care of the highest quality and receive effective pain management and symptom control for conditions related to your terminal diagnosis.

**Be admitted only if we can provide the care you need** - a qualified staff member will assess your needs. If you require care or services that we do not have the resources to provide, we will inform you, and refer you to alternative services, if available; or admit you, but only after explaining our limitations and the lack of a suitable alternative.

**Receive emergency instructions** - to be told what to do in case of emergency.

## **WE WILL ASSURE THAT:**

**Physicians' orders are followed** - all medically related care is provided in accordance with your physicians' orders and that a plan of care specifies the services and their frequency and duration.

**Personal care is provided** - by a trained hospice aide who is supervised by a nurse.

## **YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:**

**Notify us of changes in your condition** - to notify us of changes in your condition (e.g., hospitalization, changes in the plan of care, symptoms).

**Follow the Care Plan** - to follow the plan of care and accept responsibility for any refusal of treatment.

**Notify us of schedule changes** - to notify us if your visit schedule needs to be changed (for example, you have other appointments or times you will be away from home).

**Advise us of problems** - to advise us of any problems or dissatisfaction with the services provided.

**Physician's care** - remain under a physician's care while receiving agency services.

**Provide a safe environment** - to provide a safe environment for care to be provided.

**Carry out your responsibilities** - to carry out mutually agreed responsibilities.

## Notes



Huntsville Hospital Foundation was established in 1978 as a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization with a mission to develop relationships and financial resources to support the health care programs, projects and services of Huntsville and Madison Hospitals. Thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations and organizations, our physicians and staff are able to provide outstanding medical care for our patients, regardless of their ability to pay. We rely on philanthropic support to provide the cutting-edge equipment and invaluable programs that ultimately benefit our patients. Your gifts make a difference in their lives, and we thank you!

The Foundation accepts gifts on Huntsville Hospital's behalf and works to fund both present and future equipment and program needs. Contributions of any amount are gratefully accepted and may be unrestricted gifts or designated for a specific hospital facility or program. Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible, with 100 percent of gifts benefiting the hospital program or department designated by its donors.

There is no finer or more appropriate gift than one which offers health and hope to others. A gift to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation is a gift to our community. We invite you to partner with us in giving the gift of life to our patients!

To support this program – Please contact us  
**(256) 265-8077** | [huntsvillehospitalfoundation.org](http://huntsvillehospitalfoundation.org)

Every gift makes a difference! Your tax deductible donation to the Foundation will help provide lifesaving equipment, as well as health and hope to our patients.



# Caring for Life

Hospice Family Care • The Caring House

10000 Serenity Lane • Huntsville, AL 35803

**(256) 650-1212** · [hhcaringforlife.org](http://hhcaringforlife.org)