Choosing a Quality Hospice

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) has developed some questions to help you identify factors that my be important to you and your family when selecting a hospice. The answers below are specific to Hospice Family Care.

Is the hospice Medicare certified?
Yes, Hospice Family Care is Medicare certified.

Has the hospice been surveyed by a state or federal oversight agency in the last five years?
Yes, Hospice Family Care was surveyed in September 2016. There were minor deficiencies found, and a corrective plan was put in place to address them.

Is the organization an NHPCO member and does it comply with all aspects of NHPCO's standards for hospice programs?
Yes, we are a member of NHPCO.

Is the hospice accredited by a national organization?
Since opening our inpatient facility, we are researching the different accreditation options.

Does the hospice conduct a family evaluation survey?
Yes, we conduct an evaluation survey for each patient upon their death independently as well as through Healthstreams.

Does the hospice own or operate a care facility to provide home-like care in a hospice residence, hospital or nursing home?
Yes, we opened a 15-bed inpatient facility in November 2017.

Are clinical staff (physicians, nurses, social workers) certified or credentialed in hospice and palliative care?
Yes. We have the following certified clinical staff:
• Two of the four Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Administrators in Alabama are on our team.
• Four Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Nurses
• Our Medical Director is a Certified Hospice Medical Director.

What services do volunteers offer, and if requested, how quickly will a volunteer be available?
• Patient companion
• Family support
• Homemaker / Errands
• Life review / Legacy
• Relaxation / Meditation
• Child grief support
• Adult grief support
• Arts and crafts
• Veterans Honor Veterans
• Vigil Volunteers
• Special events
• Haircuts
• Massage therapy
• Office / Administrative
• Media outreach
• Inpatient facility

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Will staff come to the home if there is a crisis at any time of the day or night and on weekends? Who is available to make the home visit (nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains)?
Yes, we have registered nurse coverage 24/7 as well as all other hospice disciplines as needed.

Which local hospitals and nursing homes does the hospice work with?
• We have contracts with all 16 nursing facilities in Madison County.
• We work with Huntsville Hospital.

What "extra" services does the hospice offer?
• Nail care
• Massage therapy
• Music therapy
• Bereavement groups

How long has the hospice been operating in the community?
Since 1979. Hospice Family Care is Madison County's first and only not-for-profit hospice.

How many patients at any one time are assigned to each hospice staff member?
Each nurse, social worker and hospice aide are assigned patients based on acuity and geography.

What screening and type of training do hospice volunteers receive before they are placed with patients and families?
• Our volunteers are screened and trained just as if they were employees of Hospice Family Care. This screening process includes an interview and background check.
• We provide our volunteers both online and classroom training.
• Our volunteers also have one-on-one in-person training depending on their volunteer assignment.

How quickly can the intake/admissions staff begin the admissions process? Is someone available at nights or on weekends?
• Our team is available for admissions around the clock.
• We attempt to contact the patient's family within 20 minutes of referral.
• If we have an order from the physician, we can usually have the admission started within 2 – 4 hours of referral.

What is the organization's governance structure?
We are governed by a volunteer board of directors that reports to the Health Care Authority of the City of Huntsville.

Is the hospice a _We Honor Veterans_ Partner?
Yes. We are a Level 1 Partner.

Hospice Family Care