

# HOSPICE + PALLIATIVE CARE: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Palliative and hospice care share many similarities. Both models of care focus on symptom relief, quality of life and family involvement. Care is holistic, collaborative and delivered by a team of specially trained providers.

**However, there are important distinctions that patients who are suffering from serious illness, their families and providers need to understand.**

## Timing

**HOSPICE:** Is for people with a terminal illness and who are not expected to live longer than 6 months. The focus is on comfort, not curing an illness.

**PALLIATIVE CARE:** Is for people living with serious illness who may also be receiving treatment to cure their illness or prolong their life. Early referrals to palliative care are recommended.

## Eligibility

**HOSPICE:** Requires hospice and attending doctors to certify that patient is terminally ill and the patient agrees to forgo curative care.\*

**PALLIATIVE CARE:** May require a physician referral.

## Care Location

**HOSPICE:** Most often provided in the place patient calls home by a team of professionals that guides the family in taking care of the patient.

**PALLIATIVE CARE:** Is provided in a variety of settings including the hospital, medical office or home in collaboration with the patient's other medical professionals.

## Payment

**HOSPICE:** Is covered by the Medicare Hospice Benefit, Medicaid Hospice Benefit, and most private insurance plans. In most cases hospice care is fully covered but check plan details for any exceptions.

**PALLIATIVE CARE:** Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, cover all or part of palliative care, just as with other hospital and medical services.

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*\*Medicaid or CHIP beneficiaries under the age of 21 who elect the hospice benefit do not have to waive curative care.*