



A Guide To

Hospice Care

*Clear answers. Compassionate support.
When it matters most.*

What is Hospice Care?

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Hospice care is a philosophy of care that focuses on comfort, dignity, and quality of life for people facing a serious, life-limiting illness.

Rather than focusing on curing disease, hospice focuses on caring for the whole person, addressing physical comfort, emotional well-being, spiritual concerns, and the needs of loved ones.

Hospice care supports people in living as fully and comfortably as possible, wherever they call home, during the final chapters of life.

Did You Know?

Choosing hospice does not mean giving up care. It means choosing a different kind of care ~ one focused on comfort, dignity, and quality of life.

How Snowline approaches hospice care:

At Snowline Health, we serve our neighbors with compassionate, highly skilled care rooted in respect for each person's values, wishes, and lived experience.

Our ***Interdisciplinary Team*** ~ including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, home health aides, spiritual care providers, counselors, and trained volunteers ~ works closely with the patient, family, and attending physician to create a personalized plan of care.

The intent of the plan of care is to honor the patient's wishes and to provide the patient with the highest quality of life possible, comfort being the priority. Each plan is designed to provide the right care, at the right time, and in the right place, with comfort and dignity as the guiding priorities.



Who can receive Hospice Care?

Who is Hospice Care for?

Hospice care is available to people with a life-limiting illness when curative treatment is no longer the focus, or when comfort and quality of life have become the primary goals.

Hospice serves people with many diagnoses, including but not limited to:

- Cancer
- Cardiac disease
- Pulmonary (lung) disease
- End-stage renal disease
- Alzheimer's and other dementias
- Neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease

How Snowline serves diverse needs:

Snowline's Hospice Care serves patients based on need, not diagnosis alone. Each individual's situation is unique, and our care plans reflect that, adapting over time as needs change.

Care is provided to any who qualify and regardless of a person's ability to pay. As a community-based nonprofit hospice, Snowline is committed to ensuring access to compassionate care for all who qualify.



When should Hospice Care be considered?

When is it time to consider hospice?

Deciding when to begin hospice care can be difficult. Often, families are unsure whether “it’s time.”

Hospice may be appropriate when there is:

- A noticeable decline in health despite treatment
- Increased difficulty with activities of daily living
- Frequent hospitalizations or emergency room visits
- Worsening symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, or fatigue
- A desire to focus on comfort and quality of life rather than aggressive treatment
- If your doctor has told you time is limited
- If your doctor or provider has recommended a referral to hospice

Choosing hospice is a choice to focus on comfort and quality of life.

How Snowline helps guide the decision:

Snowline’s care team is available to answer questions early, even before hospice services begin.

We help patients and families understand:

- What hospice care can offer
- What support is available at home
- How care can evolve over time

Choosing hospice is always the patient’s choice, and that choice can be revisited at any time.

Did You Know?

Hospice care is not limited to the last days of life. Many patients receive hospice support for weeks or months allowing more time for comfort, connection, and support.



What care does Hospice provide ?

What services does hospice care include?

Hospice care is comprehensive and holistic, addressing:

- Pain and symptom management
- Emotional and psychological support
- Spiritual care and guidance
- Education and coaching for caregivers
- Practical assistance and coordination of care
- Support for loved ones before and after death

How Snowline delivers whole-person care:

Snowline Hospice Care provides:

- Expert pain and symptom management
- Medications related to the hospice prognosis
- Medical supplies and durable medical equipment
- Nursing visits and **24-7** availability to address needs at night or on weekends
- Assistance with personal care
- Counseling and emotional support
- Spiritual care based on personal beliefs
- Trained volunteer companionship
- Bereavement support for families

Care plans are reviewed regularly and adjusted as needs change, ensuring comfort and continuity.

The Snowline *Promise*

*We will meet you where you are
~ physically, emotionally, and spiritually ~
and walk beside you with compassion,
respect, and honesty.*

Who makes up the Hospice Care Team?



The Hospice Care team is an interdisciplinary group of individuals who work together to meet the physical, medical, psychosocial, emotional, and spiritual needs of the hospice patient and family. Each team member brings specialized expertise, but all share the same goal: comfort, dignity, and respect.

An interdisciplinary team can include all the following:

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

Attending Physician - while the patient's attending physician is not a Snowline staff member, they are an integral part of the patient care team. The physician and patient care team work together to ensure the highest quality of care and comfort for the patient. You do not need to have an attending physician to receive hospice care.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Medical Director - works closely with your Interdisciplinary Team to ensure comfort and quality of life for the patient:

- Care plan oversight
- Collaboration with patient's physician, when applicable
- Oversight of symptom management

NURSE PRACTITIONER

Nurses Practitioner -work with Snowline's Medical Director and your attending physician, ensuring you receive high quality patient centered care. Nurse Practitioner's support includes the following:

- In-home, and Hospice face-to-face visits
- Palliative consultations
- Pain and symptom management
- Instruction on patient care and safety
- Physician communication and collaboration

REGISTERED NURSES

Registered Nurses - make routine home visits to provide professional medical services to patients. Registered Nurses assign additional home visits to Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) when needed. Nursing services include the following:

- Pain management and symptom control
- Instruction on patient care and safety
- Physician communication and collaboration
- Nursing services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

SOCIAL WORKERS

Medical Social Workers - evaluate needs and advocate for the rights of the patient. Snowline's hospice medical social workers are all master's degree prepared or licensed clinical social workers.

- May include emotional support and counseling for patient and family
- Support for advanced care planning and establishing goals of care
- Psychosocial and emotional support to the patient, family, and paid caregivers
- Facilitating appropriate community resources

SPIRITUAL CARE PROVIDERS

Spiritual Care Providers - offer spiritual and emotional guidance to support the patient and family in accordance with, or independent of, the family's religious beliefs. Telephone calls and home visits may include:

- Spiritual support and counseling
- Support for a broad base of beliefs and practices
- Coordination with patient's clergy, as desired
- Assistance in planning and officiating a funeral or memorial service, as needed

BEREAVEMENT COORDINATORS

Bereavement Coordinators - provide grief support to patients, families, and hired caregivers. The bereavement coordinator will make contact after the death of your loved one. Grief services may include:

- Support and counseling for children, family and patient
- Grief education for adults regarding the needs of children
- Grief support for anyone struggling with grief
- 13 months of follow-up for families after the death of a loved one

HOME HEALTH AIDES

Home Health Aides - provide personal care. The Home Health Aide plan of care is created by a Registered Nurse in collaboration with the patient and family. It may include:

- Bathing: shower, tub or bed baths
- Hair care: shampooing, combing, shaving
- Skin care, nail care, oral hygiene
- Assistance with walking and other activities of daily living

TRAINED VOLUNTEERS

Trained Volunteers - are available to help you at home for up to 4 hours a week. Talk to your nurse or social worker to arrange this service. Volunteers provide such assistance as:

- Respite or Companionship Volunteers relieve caregivers to rest, run errands, visit a friend, etc
- Assist with light household chores

Where is Hospice Care provided?

Where does hospice care take place?

Hospice care is provided wherever the patient calls home, including:

- A private residence
- Assisted living or senior communities
- Skilled nursing facilities
- Even to individuals who are unhoused, if we have a safe meeting place and method for communication

Snowline's commitment to care at home:

Most Snowline patients choose to remain at home, surrounded by familiar people and comforts.

When care is provided in assisted living or nursing facilities, Snowline works closely with facility staff to supplement care and ensure continuity.

Did You Know?

Hospice care is not limited to the last days of life. Many patients receive hospice support for weeks or months, allowing more time for comfort, connection, and support.



What role do Family & Loved Ones play ?

How are loved ones involved in hospice care?

Family members and caregivers are an essential part of the hospice journey. Roles may include:

- Primary caregiver
- Care coordinator
- Decision-maker or advocate
- Emotional support provider
- Advanced frailty or multiple

How Snowline supports families

Snowline treats the patient and family as a unit of care.

We provide:

- Education and coaching for caregivers
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Guidance through difficult conversations
- Help navigating practicals and end-of-life decisions

No one is expected to walk this journey alone.



Caregiver Tip

*If something doesn't feel right,
call your hospice team.
You're never bothering us —
that's why we're here.*

What if we need help after-hours?

Is hospice available at night or on weekends?

Yes. Hospice care includes 24-hour access to nursing support.

Snowline's 24/7 support

- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year access to care (including holidays)
- Immediate phone support
- In-person visits when needed

Calling our main hospice line ensures the fastest response:

(530) 621-7820

When Should I Call?

Call Snowline any time you notice:

- A change in breathing
- Increased pain or discomfort
- New confusion or restlessness
- Medication concerns
- Equipment issues
- A feeling that "something isn't right"

If you are unsure whether to call, that is often your answer.

*A moment
at 2am*

It's late.

The house is quiet.

Something doesn't feel right.

You may not be sure whether it's serious. You may not want to "bother" anyone.

Please call.

*You are never interrupting us.
You are never overreacting.
You are never alone in the night.*

That is why we are here.



Do patients have a choice in their care?

Do patients have control over hospice care?

Yes. Patients have the right to:

- Choose hospice care
- Choose their hospice provider
- Participate in their care plan
- Accept or decline services
- Change their mind at any time

Snowline's respect for patient choice:

Snowline honors each patient's values, beliefs, and decisions.

Hospice care focuses on comfort and does not include treatments intended to artificially prolong life, such as ventilators or aggressive life-support measures.

Did You Know?

Hospice care is always a choice ~ and that choice can be revisited whenever circumstances change.



Can Hospice Care be stopped or changed?

Can a patient leave hospice care?

Yes. A patient may choose to stop Hospice care at any time for any reason.

Hospice care may also end if:

- The patient's condition improves
- Curative treatment is chosen
- Care needs change
- The patient moves outside the service area

Your Choice Continues

You may:

- Change your goals of care
- Pursue curative treatment again
- Transfer to another hospice provider
- Pause or revoke Hospice services at any time

How Snowline supports transitions:

If Hospice care ends, Snowline works with patients and families to ensure a smooth transition and continued support when appropriate.

Did You Know?

Beginning Hospice care does not close doors. If circumstances change, medically or personally, your care plan can change too.

*Hospice is designed to support you,
not limit you.*



How is Hospice Care paid for?

How is Hospice Care funded?

For most patients, hospice care is covered by:

- Medicare
- Medi-Cal (Medicaid)
- Most private insurance plans
- Veterans' benefits (when applicable)

Under the Medicare Hospice Benefit, hospice care is typically covered at little to no out-of-pocket cost to the patient. Snowline does not collect any payments from patients for Hospice Care. This includes services related to the hospice diagnosis, such as nursing care, medications for comfort, medical equipment, and support services.

Many private insurance plans offer similar hospice benefits. Snowline's team can help verify coverage and explain what is included before services begin.

What does the Hospice Benefit usually cover?

While coverage varies slightly by payer, hospice benefits typically include:

- Nursing visits
- Physician oversight related to the hospice diagnosis
- Medications for symptom management and comfort
- Medical supplies and durable medical equipment (such as hospital beds or oxygen)
- Social work and counseling services
- Spiritual care
- Hospice aide support for personal care
- Volunteer services
- Bereavement support for family members

Our care team reviews coverage carefully at admission and explains any details clearly, so families understand what to expect.

What if I'm worried about the cost?

It is completely natural to feel concerned about finances during a serious illness. Many families hesitate to ask about hospice because they are unsure whether they can afford it.

The good news is that most hospice care is fully covered under existing insurance benefits. *Snowline does not collect payments from patients for Hospice Care.*

Snowline Hospice provides care regardless of ability to pay. As a community-based nonprofit organization, our mission is to serve those who qualify for hospice services, not to create financial hardship.

If there are questions about coverage, our team will:

- Verify insurance benefits
- Explain any potential out-of-pocket costs
- Help explore financial assistance options if needed
- Answer questions openly and honestly

No one should delay comfort care because of uncertainty about cost.

Will we receive unexpected bills?

Transparency is important. Before hospice services begin, Snowline reviews:

- Which services are covered
- Which medications are included under the hospice benefit
- Any services that may require discussion in advance

If questions arise during care, we encourage families to speak with us right away. Our goal is to ensure clarity and prevent surprises.

Does choosing hospice change other benefits?

Electing hospice care under Medicare means that care related to the life-limiting illness shifts to a comfort-focused model rather than curative treatment. However:

- Patients may continue to receive care for conditions unrelated to the hospice diagnosis.
- Patients may withdraw from hospice at any time if they choose to pursue curative treatment again.

Hospice is a choice, and that choice remains in the patient's control.

Snowline's Commitment as a Nonprofit

Snowline's nonprofit mission:

To bring peace and dignity through life's transitions by providing comfort, care, and support to people in need.

As a nonprofit organization, Snowline exists to serve the community, ensuring that all who qualify receive compassionate, high-quality care, regardless of their ability to pay.

As a nonprofit organization:

- We provide care based on need.
- We do not turn away eligible patients because of inability to pay.
- Community support and responsible stewardship allow us to extend compassionate care to all who qualify.

Our priority is always comfort, dignity, and support, and never financial burden.

The Snowline *Promise*

We believe no one should have to choose between comfort and affordability.



Snowline
Health