

## Common Hospice Misconceptions



**Misconception One: *Hospice is a place where people go to live until death.***

Hospice is designed to provide care for a person in their own home; whether that's a house, apartment, assisted living facility or nursing home. The goal is to keep the person in the environment they are most comfortable. Occasionally, a person will need to go to an in-patient facility for a few days to get symptoms under control or for up to five days for respite if the primary caregiver needs a break or is not available.

**Misconception Two: *Hospice is for the last days of life.***

Hospice is a program of care designed to provide physical, psychological and spiritual support for people with a terminal illness and their family. Hospice uses a team to care for the whole person, not just their disease.

**Misconception Three: *Hospice represents a failure of care.***

Hospice is a type of specialized care that focuses on incurable and terminal illnesses. It helps prevent the severe, unrelieved suffering that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study of end-of-life care in five hospitals revealed. Some of the relevant findings are:

- ☞ 38% of patients who died spent at least a week in ICU, in a coma or on a ventilator.
- ☞ Only 47% of physicians knew when their patients didn't want CPR.
- ☞ According to their families, 50% of conscious patients, who died in a hospital, experienced moderate to severe pain for at least half the time prior to death.

**Misconception Four: *All hospice programs are the same.***

Many hospice programs have their own, individual focus. For instance, Valor HospiceCare & The Valor Institute for Palliative Medicine is an academic-based organization that views quality patient care, community and staff education, research and public health as essential components of our mission. In addition, Valor HospiceCare has an integrative medicine program to provide holistic care services.

**Misconception Five: *Most patients who need hospice care are in hospice programs.***

According to Medicare, only 17% of those eligible for hospice use the **free benefit**. Only 15% of eligible patients in nursing homes or assisted living facilities utilize the benefit.

**Misconception Six: *Hospice represents loss of control.***

Actually, hospice gives back control related to care. The person's functioning, not necessarily the length of life, is maximized while the suffering of the patient and family is minimized. Hospice offers hope for quality time, dignity, pain and symptom relief, and growth at the end of life.

***Providing the Gift of Peace, Comfort and Dignity***

For more information, please call **877.615.3996**

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