

There are many questions about hospice care. Why it is needed? What are the pro-life, ethical considerations of hospice? This brochure answers many questions you may have.

What is hospice?

Hospice is a system of care for persons with terminal illnesses. It is designed to provide comfort and support for patients and their families. Hospice's purpose is to relieve the negative symptoms of dying while improving the positive aspects of the life remaining.

How does hospice help?

Hospice provides a team approach for patient and family care. The team includes the patient, family, personal physician, a nurse, social worker, personal care aide, a chaplain, volunteers and hospice medical director.

The team provides individually planned care to meet the patient's needs. Hospice provides for medical equipment (including a semi-electric hospital bed, bedside commode, etc) and medications related to the hospice diagnosis. This includes oxygen, medication to control pain and nausea, plus whatever is needed to keep the patient comfortable.

The nurse

visits regularly to assess patient needs and desires. The nurse will instruct the patient and caregivers in providing day to day care and gives emotional support.

The social worker

assists the patient, family, and loved ones with resource needs and emotional issues. Grief counseling is available for a year for the family after the patient passes.

The personal care aide

assists the patient with bathing and other personal care, changes linens, and can help keep the patient's room clean and tidy.

The chaplain

assists the patient's pastor or counsels the patient and family alone if spiritual support is desired.

Volunteers

are available to run errands or just to sit and read to the patient.

Does the patient really need each of these people?

Not necessarily. The patient can choose to have only part of the team actively involved at any one time. Also, as the physical condition changes, services may be added or deleted. It is ALWAYS the

patient's right to choose his or her level of services.

Do I have to go into a special home for hospice care?

Approximately 90% of persons receive hospice services in their own homes. This care can also be provided in an assisted living facility, a nursing home, and occasionally in a hospital. There also are a limited number of in-patient hospice facilities in South Carolina.

Who pays for hospice services?

This is a primary Medicare Benefit, but hospice care also can be paid for by private insurance, Medicaid or the Veterans Administration. Most hospices provide indigent care for patients who can't pay. Check with the hospice of your choice to see if this is available.

What if I don't like the hospice I chose or decide I'd rather not have hospice care?

You ALWAYS have the right to switch to a different hospice program or decline hospice services entirely. This is YOUR RIGHT!

How can I help a friend or loved one in hospice care?

First, love and pray for them. Make frequent, but short visits. Remember

that laughter is great medicine and is often very much needed. It is important to understand that your loved one still has the need for touch, laughter, tears, and listening confidants.

Give the family a restful break by offering to assist with simple chores. Bring food, including frozen dishes that can be heated later. Reminisce about past good times. Offer to write letters. This list could go on indefinitely. Be creative and you will be invaluable!

Is a "Do Not Resuscitate Order" (DNR) required to qualify for hospice services?

No. Some hospices require patients to sign a DNR, so you must shop around to find one that allows the patient to have a Durable Medical Power of Attorney (DMPOA) instead of a DNR.

What kind of Durable Medical Power of Attorney do I need?

You need a pro-life Will to Live. Do not confuse this with the South Carolina State Government's Living Will document. For information on the dangers of a South Carolina Living Will, please request SCCL's brochure, "What's Wrong with South Carolina's Living Will?") Call South Carolina Citizens for Life in Columbia for assistance or log on to

sclife.org to download the pro-life Will to Live. The Will to Live gives legal authority to the person the patient chooses to make medical decisions if the patient is unable to do so.

How do I find a hospice?

Your physician can recommend one to you or for a listing of all DHEC accredited hospices, call South Carolina Citizens for Life at the numbers below.

Ila M. Woodwyk, R.N., has been actively nursing over 35 years. Her extensive experience includes working in hospice, intensive care, emergency room and home health. She is a staff member with the South Carolina Citizens for Life office and can be reached there most weekday afternoons.



South Carolina Citizens for Life

THE FIRST CIVIL RIGHT IS THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Telephone - 803-252-5433

Email - sccl@sclife.org

Website - sclife.org

P.O. Box 5865, Columbia, SC 29250



What is Hospice Care?

**Ila M. Woodwyk, RN,
Answers your questions.**