

All About Hospice

What is hospice?

Hospice is a program of care and support for persons with life limiting conditions, as well as their families. For patients on hospice, the focus of care is on comfort, relief of symptoms and quality of life, and not on curative treatment. On hospice, care comes to the person in their home. Since the focus is on managing symptoms, patients do not routinely go out to doctor visits or do diagnostic workups (like scans, labs, or testing).

Who qualifies for hospice?

To qualify for hospice, a person must have two doctors (their referring doctor and the hospice medical director) that have certified they have a terminal condition with a prognosis of six months or less. People can stay on hospice longer than six months if they continue to meet criteria at that six month mark.

What is Covered by Hospice

- Time and services of the care team, including visits to the patient's location by the hospice physician, nurse, social worker, home health aide, and chaplain/spiritual adviser
- Medication for symptom control, including pain relief
- Medical equipment like a hospital bed, wheelchairs or walkers, and medical supplies such as oxygen, bandages, and catheters
- Any other Medicare-covered services needed to manage pain and other symptoms related to the terminal illness, as recommended by the hospice team
- Short-term inpatient care (e.g. when adequate pain and symptom management cannot be achieved in the home setting)
- Short-term respite care for family caregivers (e.g. temporary relief from caregiving to avoid or address "caregiver burnout")

- Grief and loss counseling for the patient and loved ones, who may experience anticipatory grief. Grief counseling is provided to family members for up to 13 months after a death.
- The following may be covered on a case-by-case basis: physical and occupational therapy, speech-language pathology services, dietary counseling.

What is Typically Not Covered*

- Treatment intended to cure a terminal illness or other illness
- Room and board in a nursing home or hospice residential facility
- Custodial care or caregiving services
- Care in an emergency department, inpatient facility care, or ambulance transportation unless it was arranged by the hospice team

**Some things are determined on a case-by-case basis. Please talk to hospice directly to better understand how this looks for your particular situation.*

How is It Paid For?

Medicare and Washington state Medicaid cover all hospice services. Private insurance plans offer a hospice benefit, but the specifics of how it is covered will depend on the individual plan. Hospice is also covered by Tricare and the VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package. For patients who do not have medical insurance and are not eligible for Medicare or Medicaid, they would need to reach out to local hospice agencies to ask about financial assistance programs.

The information is provided as a community service. By listing these businesses, Overlake Hospital Medical Center is not recommending, endorsing, or ranking any particular program. OHMC cannot vouch for the quality, expertise, safety, or cost of the services provided by listed businesses.

Hospice Programs

Continuum Hospice

King & Snohomish Counties
206-752-1100
www.continuumwa.com

Evergreen Hospice

King & Snohomish Counties
425-899-1040
www.evergreenhealth.com

Kindred Hospice

King County
206-525-1090
www.kindredathome.org

Kline Galland Hospice

King County
206-805-1930
www.klinegalland.org

Providence Hospice of Seattle

King County
206-320-4000
www.providence.org

Providence Hospice of Snohomish

Snohomish County
425-261-4800
www.providence.org

Virginia Mason Franciscan Hospice

King, Pierce & Kitsap Counties
866-969-7028
www.vmfh.org

For more information about hospice:

Hospice Foundation of America

www.hospicefoundation.org

American Hospice Foundation

www.americanhospice.org

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services:

www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/Hospice

National Institute on Aging

www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-are-palliative-care-and-hospice-care