



there is a
DIFFERENCE



A Patient and Family Guide Hospice Care

Hospice seeks to assist terminally ill patients and their families to live fully, with dignity and freedom of choice.

The AmHeart Hospice program works to insure quality of life, family involvement and emotional support during a difficult time.

"Our family deeply appreciated all the services AmHeart Hospice provided; especially at the beginning and end, which was crucial. Respect, dignity, patience and empathy were all welcomed. We can't thank you enough."

“ One of the benefits of hospice is that you will be walked through the entire process. That doesn’t always happen in healthcare in general.” *Matt Brauss, COO*

What Is Hospice Care

Hospice provides care and support for persons in the last phase of terminal illness. It relieves their discomfort, both physical and psychological, and seeks to maintain quality of life for patients and their families, helping them to live as fully and comfortably as possible.

Hospice neither hastens nor postpones death. Hospice is based on the premise that the quality of one's life is every bit as important as the length of life and caring is not a "lesser option" when cure is impossible.

The AmHeart Hospice Care Team works with both the patient and the family providing guidance and support along with hands-on care. We work to meet the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of our patients, including keeping them as pain-free and symptom-free as possible. The family never needs to feel alone in coping with the terminal illness.

Getting Started with Hospice



When To Initiate Hospice Care

The decision to start hospice care is not an easy one to make. Beginning hospice care in a timely manner is an important key to its success. Many hospice patients are ambulatory and only require occasional assistance at the time they are admitted to the hospice program.

According to national statistics, the average length of stay for patients in a hospice program is about 50 days, yet the hospice benefit as approved by Congress allows for 180 days or more of coverage as needed. The earlier the hospice team intervenes, the more satisfaction is expressed by patients and families. Referring to hospice earlier provides access to the full scope of hospice services available to the patient and family.

Recommending Hospice Care

Physicians are not the only ones who can recommend hospice care. Many times the referral comes from a nursing home, a family member, a member of the clergy or a social worker. Or, it might come from you.

Who Is Eligible?

To be admitted into a hospice program, the patient must:

- Be diagnosed with a terminal illness
- Have a prognosis limited to six months
- Refuse or not be eligible for aggressive care for the terminal illness
- Agree, along with their family, to participate in the Plan of Care

Although hospice care is most often thought of in conjunction with cancer patients, there are other patients who may benefit from hospice care as well, including: patients with congestive heart failure, Alzheimer's, AIDS, end-stage liver, heart or lung disease and other debilitating diseases.

Will I Still See My Regular Physician?

Attending physicians are encouraged to continue following their patients on our hospice program and to take an active role in their hospice care. Your primary care physician can continue to play a large part in your care.

How Long Can I Be On Hospice?

After your initial six months in hospice, you continue receiving hospice care as long as the attending physician re-certifies that you continue to meet hospice criteria and have a terminal prognosis of six months or less.

What Is A Plan Of Care?

A Plan of Care is an individually tailored treatment plan which is developed in conjunction with you, your family, primary care physician and AmHeart Hospice.

What if I no longer need Hospice?

If your condition improves or the disease goes into remission, you can be discharged from hospice and return to your traditional Medicare / Medicaid benefit. If you should wish to return to hospice care later, Medicare / Medicaid, most private insurance companies and HMOs will allow readmission. You always have the right to change your mind regarding your care.

Admission Policy

AmHeart Hospice admits adult patients based on federally-defined admission criteria without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, or diagnosis. Admission criteria do not deny admission or services to patients with communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV, MRSA and Hepatitis B.

Shaping Hospice Care

Since our inception in 1994 we have become one of the most rapidly growing and reliable hospice programs in Missouri. More than 2100 families have been helped by AmHeart Hospice. Our staff of professionals continues to shape the face of hospice in Missouri, serving on state committees, providing input and expertise in designing and updating hospice benefits and regulations. AmHeart Hospice provides continuing education courses not only for its employees, but also for physicians and nursing home staff in the community at large. The management team has over 75 years of combined service in hospice care. That same professionalism has shaped AmHeart Hospice.

Our program is about quality of life, family involvement and emotional support. We work directly with you and your physician or a facility of your choice to help terminally ill patients live the last days of their lives fully, with dignity and freedom of choice. Our website contains more information and what to look for when choosing a hospice.

Comprehensive Services

Palliative Care

Palliative care is given to relieve pain, control symptoms and provide comfort to the patient. Early intervention can mean quicker symptom control and pain management. Once pain is under control, attention can be given to helping patients rediscover what they still can do for themselves and enjoy life.

24 Hour On - Call Support

A Professional hospice RN is available by telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist in case of emergency.

Patient Education And Family Communication

Clear, honest information allows patients and families to make informed care decisions and prevent "crisis" situations. It decreases family anxiety and can prevent unnecessary hospitalization.

The AmHeart Hospice One Purpose Difference



**Not all hospices
are alike.**

**It's important to ask what
is covered and what is not.
We know of no program
that covers more than
AmHeart Hospice.**

Assistance With

All Medicare/Medicaid Paperwork

We work with the complexities of Medicare/Medicaid and private insurers. We're here to assist with and, in some cases, do the paperwork for you.

Head-To-Toe Patient Visits

On average, our patients are seen every other day, whether it's a visit from the nurse, the certified aide, the social worker or other care team member. During our personal visits, patients receive a complete assessment which can include checking vital signs, dressing and wound care, personal hygiene, feeding, changing linens and of course, warm friendly conversation. We spend quality time with our patients.

What We Provide

All prescribed medications, medical supplies and equipment for your individual Plan of Care are provided. We routinely cover items appropriate for the patient's comfort, such as nutrition supplements, adult diapers, mouth and skin care products, ostomy supplies, heel protectors, cushions, mattresses and geri-chairs. AmHeart Hospice covers all medications whether prescription or OTC, as they relate to the terminal condition and appear on the plan of care.

Other Services We Cover

Ambulance transfers, inpatient admissions, test and lab expenses related to the terminal illness, dating from the day of admission to hospice.

Bereavement Services

Spiritual and emotional support for the family continues through the bereavement period. If you have any questions about this difficult time in life, AmHeart Hospice is there to support you.

- We exist for one purpose – to serve as a concerned and caring resource for terminally ill patients and their families. Our focus on delivering the best quality hospice care is never diluted by having to manage other services. Hospice is all we do.
- We are accessible 24 hours a day. As a small, responsive organization whose owners are also day-to-day working partners, decisions about services and care issues are addressed and resolved rapidly.
- We promise:
 - * Family support and involvement
 - * Clear and direct answers to your questions
 - * Consistency and quality in our Care Providers
 - * Accessibility and prompt response to your needs
 - * Quality time spent with each patient during every visit
 - * Bereavement support for 13 mos. or more after the patient dies

Hospice Affordability

Most insurance companies and Medicare and Medicaid cover hospice care. Check with your carrier for specific details about your coverage. Your attending physician continues to bill for services in the usual manner. We provide regular updates as requested to keep referring physicians and case managers informed.

Service	Medicare	Medicaid
Nursing Visits	100%	100%
Therapy Visits	100%	100%
Visits by Nurse Aide	100%	100%
Social Worker Visits	100%	100%
Chaplain	100%	100%
24 Hr. On-Call RN	100%	100%
Medical Equipment	100%	100%
Medical Supplies	100%	100%
Prescriptions*	95%	95%
Continuous Home Care	100%	100%
Respite Care*	95%	95%
Inpatient Care	100%	100%
Ambulance Service	100%	100%
Nursing Home Room & Board	0%	100%

* Medicare and Medicaid Hospice benefits require a small co-payment for prescriptions and respite care.

The above services must be approved by the hospice care team and appear on the patient's Plan of Care.

Benefit Period

Hospice care is given to Medicare and Medicaid patients in "benefit periods." Coverage provides for two 90- day periods and a 30- day period, followed by an unlimited number of additional recertification periods. At the start of each period of care, the doctor must certify that the patient is terminally ill. A period of care starts the day the patient begins to get hospice care.

Hospice care continues as long as the doctor certifies that the patient is terminally ill and probably has less than six months to live. Even if the patient lives longer than six months, hospice care can continue as long as the doctor re-certifies the person as terminally ill.

A Qualified Experienced Staff



Your Team Leader

The leader of your care team is our Patient Care Coordinator (PCC), an RN with years of hospice experience. The PCC and the care nurse will be your primary contacts with AmHeart Hospice.

Physician Directed Medical Care

All medical care is delivered under the supervision of trained, qualified caregivers with the direction of a physician. Your personal physician is welcome to continue to participate in your care. If this is not possible, the hospice medical director can serve as your attending physician.

A Holistic Team Approach to Care

Each AmHeart Hospice Care Team is assembled specifically for needs of the patient. Teams include RNs, LPNs, home health aides, specially trained volunteers, social workers, chaplains, dietitians, physical, occupational and speech therapists.

A Spirit Of Care For the Patient as a Whole Person

"When you look at the 'how and why' of what we do, we hope it conveys a spirit of care that always considers the needs of the patient as a whole person. It's that spirit of care...caring from the heart...that sets us apart. We continually evaluate our program, using input from satisfaction surveys and conversations with other health care professionals we work with, in order to deliver the best in hospice care. We hope that when the need arises, you call upon AmHeart Hospice to meet those needs.

We believe there really is a difference."

Susan O'Kane, RN CEO

We Go Wherever We're Needed

AmHeart Hospice provides services wherever the patient resides ... in a private home, skilled nursing or residential care facility. We cover 15 Missouri counties. Short-term inpatient hospice care is available, when needed, to help the patient through a medical or family crisis.



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Accreditations and Affiliations

- AmHeart Hospice is independently owned and operated
- Certified Medicare/Medicaid hospice provider
- Licensed by the State of Missouri
- A member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Missouri Hospice and Palliative Care Association, and Greater St. Louis Hospice Organization

For more information visit:

www.callmyhospice.com