Hospice and palliative care explained

The difference between hospice and palliative care, who qualifies, and where care happens.

- **Palliative care** focuses on comfort and quality of life at any stage of a serious illness, alongside treatment.
- **Hospice** is comfort-focused care when a doctor certifies a life expectancy of about 6 months or less if the illness runs its normal course, and the person chooses comfort care instead of curative treatment.
- Hospice can be provided at home, in assisted living, in a nursing home or in a hospice house.
- Medicare's hospice benefit covers the hospice team, medications and equipment related to the terminal illness; room and board in a facility is usually not covered.
- You can stop hospice at any time and return to regular Medicare coverage.

Questions to ask a hospice

- How quickly can you admit?
- How often will the nurse and aide visit?
- Who answers at night and on weekends?
- Do you offer respite and grief support for the family?

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