The Hospice Team

Experience has shown that the key to delivering quality comprehensive hospice care is through an interdisciplinary team approach. The team (nursing home staff and hospice staff) is comprised of skilled professionals and supportive services, each contributing their individual expertise to the common goal of meeting the needs of patients and the families diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.

THE TEAM INCLUDES:

Medical director — The medical director assumes overall responsibility for the medical management of hospice services. The patient retains his or her attending physician who can choose the desired level of participation in directing the patient's plan of care.

Nursing — The hospice nurse offers excellent clinical skills with vast experience in the specialty areas of pain control, symptom management and comfort measures. They are available to assist and work with the nursing home staff to develop a unified plan of care to best meet the needs of the patient and family.

Social work — Social workers make routine visits to assess patient/family strengths, coping skills and the ability to adjust to the stress that can occur during a terminal illness. Support and counseling is provided throughout this process. Social workers are also available to assist with identifying needs and making appropriate referrals to community resources.

Spiritual counselors — The spiritual staff offers spiritual comfort and emotional support to all patients and families regardless of religious affiliation. They offer compassionate care while respecting the individual's decisions and beliefs.

Nurses aides — Aides receive intensive training in the delivery of bedside care for hospice patients. They offer companionship to the patient and respite to the family and nursing home staff.

Volunteers — Volunteers provide a variety of invaluable services and enhance the quality of care delivered by the professional team. Volunteer tasks include supporting patients and their families, respite care, phone reassurance, bereavement and spiritual visits and office assistance. Volunteers can also assist with fundraisers for the Indigent Patient Fund.

Contract services — In an effort to provide comprehensive medical care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and nutritional counseling are available if indicated in the patient's plan of care.

All of the hospice team members are required to participate in initial and ongoing patient care conferences. Hospice team members are available to speak at educational programs and family council meetings.