



Home Health vs. Hospice Care

Although both home health and hospice care both share the same goal of providing the best care for the needs of the patient, the difference lies in the focus of that care.

The focus of home health care is to provide cure-oriented treatments to work towards curing and healing the patient. Once it is apparent that cure-oriented treatment will no longer benefit the patient, transition to hospice care will more appropriately address the needs of the family and the patient. Hospice care is focused on providing a comfortable transition through a patient's end-of-life journey.

The Hospice Medical Director and the interdisciplinary team work together and use a wide variety of pain and symptom management methods. Together they complete a comprehensive assessment of the patient's condition which allows them to create an interdisciplinary care plan to enable the patient to live life as fully as possible. This care plan addresses medical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs.

Under hospice care, a patient's last days are spent with dignity at home or in a setting where care can be appropriately provided. The Hospice team works with the patient to address problems that may arise and supports the choices of the patient. Support is also provided to the families of the patients after the death of the patients to assist them in the bereavement process.





Medicare: Home Health vs. Hospice

For Home Health, Medicare Covers:

- 80% of approved charges for physician (under Part B only)
- Skilled nursing, if part-time or intermittent, or daily for 21 days or less
- 80% of Durable Medical Equipment
- Medical Supplies
- Medical Social Work
- Part time or intermittent Homemaker/Home Health Aide (28-35 hrs/wk)
- Physical, Speech and Occupational Therapy (limitations on occupational therapy)

For Hospice , Medicare covers all of the above PLUS the following:

- 100% coverage for a hospice physician
- Complete coverage for skilled and supportive care nursing
- Medications covered (relating to terminal illness)
- 100% coverage of Durable Medical Equipment
- 24-hour on-call nurse
- Medical Social Work for patient and caregivers
- Covered Homemaker/Home Health Aide with no hourly restrictions
- Volunteers for patients and loved ones
- Chaplain Services
- Bereavement Care
- No limits on Occupational Therapy
- Services to Nursing Facility Residents (not including Room and Board)
- Inpatient Care
- Respite care for up to 5 consecutive days (possible coinsurance)
- Skilled continuous care (during periods of medical crisis)

To qualify for Medicare Hospice Benefits, a patient must meet ALL of the following requirements:

1. Prognosis that life expectancy is 6 months or less
2. Terminal illness confirmed by physician
3. Patient elects hospice benefit
4. Care is specified in hospice plan of care
5. Hospice program is Medicare certified



A Comparison of Medicare Home Health Benefits and Hospice Benefits

<i>Service</i>	<i>Home Health Benefit</i>	<i>Hospice Benefit</i>
Skilled Nursing	Covered for skilled care, if part-time or intermittent, or daily care for 21 days or less	Covered for skilled and supportive care
Physician	Not covered under home care, but 80% of approved charge covered under Part B	Attending non-hospice affiliated physician 80% covered under part B; consulting hospice physician 100% covered
Medical Social Work	Covered for patient	Covered
Chaplain Services	Not covered	Covered
Homemaker/ Home Health Aide	Covered if part-time or intermittent, must provide "hands on personal care." 28-35/wk w/ SN and HHA	Covered, no hourly restriction
Volunteers for Patient and Caregivers	Not included	Included
Medications Related to Primary Illness	Not included	Covered
Durable Medical Equipment	80% of approved amount covered	100% covered
Respite Care	Not covered	Covered for up to 5 consecutive days
24-hour On-Call Nurse	Not required	Included
Bereavement Care	Not included	Included
Inpatient Care	Not covered under home care, but covered under hospital benefit	Covered
Medical Supplies	Medical supplies covered	Medical and personal supplies covered
Dietician	Not covered for individual patients	Covered
Physical Therapy Occupational Therapy Speech-Language Pathology	Covered with some limitations on occupational therapy	Covered
Services to Nursing Facility Residents	Not covered	Room & Board not covered
Skilled Continuous Care	Not covered	Covered, during periods of medical crisis