

Palliative Care & Hospice Care: What's the Difference?

Palliative Care is not hospice care. It is specialty healthcare that focuses on helping those living with a serious illness and their family achieve the highest quality of life possible.

Palliative Care		Hospice Care
Can begin at any age and any stage of a serious illness and may be provided alongside curative treatments.	When	Begins when 2 physicians certify that the patient has less than six months to live if the disease follows its usual course. Curative treatments are no longer being provided.
Relief from the symptoms and stress of illness with the goal to improve the quality of life for both the patient and family.	Focus	Comfort and quality of life for both the patient and family.
Generally during a hospital stay, in a primary care or specialty palliative care clinic. Some states offer home based palliative care wherever a patient calls home.	Where	Where ever a patient calls home, residential home, hospice facility, nursing facility, assisted living facility, etc.
Is supportive care with or without curative intent. Pain and symptom management, disease education, help coping with the impact of serious illness, navigating treatment options, advance care planning.	Care	Is comfort care without curative intent: patient is no longer responding to curative treatment or has elected not to further pursue such treatments. Pain and symptom management and end of life care.
Specialty trained physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, and chaplains.	Team	Specialty trained physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, nurse aides, chaplains, and either a social worker, marriage and family therapists or a mental health counselor.
Commercial health plan or private pay- separate billing for each visit, service, medication, etc.	Payment	Special benefit under most health plans, Medicaid and Medicare that covers all costs of care related to terminal diagnosis.

All Hospice Care is Palliative BUT Not All Palliative Care is Hospice