



## Should I Refer to Hospice or Palliative Care?



**The choice is often not obvious.**

Palliative and hospice care have many similarities, so knowing which service is most appropriate isn't always apparent.

### Similarities between hospice and palliative care:

- Comfort care and stress reduction
- Offer complex symptom relief related to serious illness
- Physical and psychosocial relief
- Can be provided wherever a patient calls home

**How do I know what the best choice is for my patients?**

**We can help.**

**Knowing how to spot the sometimes subtle differences between patient types can point you in the right direction.**

**Use this decision tree as a guide.**



## Hospice Care

The patient's stage of illness is...

serious, and trajectory of health status is toward decline.

Long-term recovery is...

not probable and the end result of the patient's health is continued decline.

The patient is focused on...

quality of life and meeting personal goals.

If the patient died in the next 6-9 months...

I wouldn't be surprised.

The frequency of visits is...

as often as needed by a team equipped to handle physical, emotional, spiritual and personal care needs.

Services provided include...

- Physician services
- Nursing care
- Medical equipment & supplies
- Social worker services
- Dietary counseling
- Spiritual counseling
- Bereavement services
- Physical & occupational therapy
- Volunteers
- Pharmacist services
- Speech language pathology
- Nurse aide/homemaker services
- Most medications

If a patient is eligible, choosing hospice means they will receive the **highest level of care possible** in the home setting.

## Palliative Care

serious, but trajectory of health status is stable or may improve.

possible, and the patient has potential to improve or recover from their current health state.

seeking and continuing aggressive curative treatment.

I would be surprised.

scheduled with a physician or nurse practitioner, typically based on a 3-5 week schedule.

Physician, nurse practitioner or social worker consultation focused on treating uncontrollable symptoms.

For patients with serious illness who are not eligible for hospice, palliative care can offer a valuable layer of support.

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