

START THE CONVERSATIONSM



FACTS ABOUT HOSPICE:

1. HOSPICE IS NOT ONLY FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Less than half of all Hospice patients have cancer. Hospice also serves families coping with the end-stages of chronic diseases like Alzheimer's, heart disease and neuromuscular disease.

2. HOSPICE IS FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

While most hospice patients are over 65 years old, almost 20% of hospice patients range from children through middle-aged adults.

3. HOSPICE IS PROVIDED WHEREVER YOU CALL HOME

An increasing number of hospice patients, who use the services of the visiting nurse and home health agency are treated in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and respite homes. Contact your local non-profit VNA, home health and hospice agency at 1.800.HOMECARE for more information.

4. HOSPICE IS COVERED BY INSURANCE

People over 65 are entitled to the Medicare Hospice benefit, which covers virtually all hospice expenses. Medicaid and most private insurances also provide Hospice benefits that minimize the financial burden.

5. HOSPICE IS NOT ABOUT GIVING UP

Hospice is serious medicine. Medical personnel, like your visiting nurse and home health agency, can provide care to prevent or alleviate distressing symptoms. Hospice is not about giving up. It is about living the remainder of your life as fully as possible.

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FACTS ABOUT ADVANCE DIRECTIVES:

1. AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE ALLOWS YOU TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER YOUR HEALTH CARE DECISIONS

An advance directive allows you to communicate your wishes about the kinds of treatment you would or would not want in certain circumstances. It also allows you to appoint a health care agent—someone you trust who can communicate your wishes when you are unable to do so yourself.

2. EVERY ADULT SHOULD HAVE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

Accidents, injury and unexpected illness can happen at any time and at any age. Having an advance directive allows you to provide important information to the health care professionals caring for you when you cannot speak for yourself.

3. IF YOU MAKE SOMEONE YOUR AGENT, YOU STILL MAINTAIN CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH CARE DECISIONS

Your health care agent will make your health care decisions only when you are unable to do so yourself. Until that time, you still make all your own decisions about your health care and treatment options.

4. YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND AT ANY TIME

If at any time you change your mind about the kinds of treatment you want or don't want, you can do that verbally by telling your health care providers and by updating your advance directive.

5. YOU DO NOT NEED A LAWYER TO COMPLETE YOUR ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

Advance Directive forms are available at no cost on the Vermont Ethics Network website, www.vtethicsnetwork.org, or call 802.828.2909 for more information. You can print them off and fill them out by hand or complete them online. You can also get them from your local non-profit VNA, home health and hospice agency.

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