

Choosing a Quality Hospice

Many patients and families are unaware that they can choose which hospice they prefer to provide end-of-life care.

In order to help you identify factors that may be important to you and your family when selecting a hospice, The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) has developed some questions

to ask. By reviewing answers from Hospice of the Piedmont, you can also determine the differences between local hospices and choose which will best meet the needs of you or a family member.

For more information about Hospice of the Piedmont, call 336.889.8446.

Questions to ask:

Answers from Hospice of the Piedmont:

Is the Hospice Medicare Certified?

Most hospices are certified by Medicare and are therefore required to follow Medicare rules and regulations. This is important if wish to receive hospice care as part of your Medicare/Medicaid coverage.

Yes.

Is the organization a NHPCO member and does it comply with all aspects of NHPCO's Standards for Hospice Programs?

Ask if the hospice is a current NHPCO member, if it complies with NHPCO's Standards and has completed the Standards Self Assessment, and if so, how recently they completed it.

Yes, we have a comprehensive compliance program.

Is the hospice accredited by a national organization?

Several organizations accredit hospices, surveying them to ensure they meet quality standards. Hospices are not required to be accredited but accreditation can be a reflection of its commitment to quality.

Yes, we chose to seek and attain accreditation from the Accreditation Commission on Healthcare, most recently in 2011.

Does the hospice conduct a family evaluation survey?

Many hospices ask family members to complete a brief evaluation of their services after the death of a loved one. Ask for their most recent scores so you can see how previous patients and family members have rated their services.

Yes, we use an external firm that surveys every family we serve.

Does the hospice own or operate a care facility to provide home-like care in a hospice residence, hospital or nursing home?

This may be important to you if the care needed is complex and/or family caregivers cannot care for the person at home.

Yes, our inpatient facility, Hospice Home at High Point, is located adjacent to the administrative office.

Are clinical staff (physicians, nurses, social workers) certified or credentialed in hospice and palliative care?

There are several credentials that hospice professionals can achieve based on their knowledge of hospice/palliative care and their educational experience.

Yes, we encourage all of our clinical team members to seek additional credentialing in hospice and palliative care.

What services do volunteers offer, and if requested, how quickly will a volunteer be available?

Volunteers can provide a variety of services including visits, light household chores, running errands, etc. If you want a hospice volunteer, be sure to ask how quickly one can be assigned and how they match volunteers to meet your needs.

Generally we can match a volunteer with a patient/family within 48 hours.

Will staff come to the home or facility if there is a crisis at any time of the day or night and on weekends? Who is available to make the home visit?

Hospice staff are available by phone to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, some hospices offer limited in home support on nights and weekends, while others are able to send staff out to a patient's home no matter when a crisis arises.

Yes, our 336.889.8446 line is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If I need to go to a hospital which ones does/doesn't the hospice work with?

If you have a preferred hospital, it's important to find out which ones the hospice has contracts with so they can continue to provide your hospice services in this different setting.

We have contracts with most area hospitals.

What "extra" services does the hospice offer?

All hospices provide expert medical care, emotional and spiritual care, medicines, medical supplies and equipment, volunteers and grief support after the death of a loved one. In addition to these services some hospices offer specialized programs for children, people with specific diseases, "pre-hospice" care for individuals not yet medically-ready for hospice care and other "extra" services that may benefit your family.

Our special programs include Kids Path, Grief Counseling Center, and Piedmont Palliative Care.

How long has the hospice been operating in the community?

Again, length of time in the community may be important to you and your family.

Since 1981.

How many patients at any one time are assigned to each hospice staff member who will be caring for the patient?

Some hospices assign a certain number of patients to each staff member and may be willing to share that information with you. That might influence your decision to receive care from a hospice.

We have a low patient to staff ratio. Our administrative/ supervisory staff are local and based right here in the Triad.

What screening and type of training do hospice volunteers receive before they are placed with patients and families?

All volunteers must receive training or orientation on hospice care. Some hospices provide specialized training related to bereavement, pediatric care, nursing home care, etc.

All volunteers are carefully screened and complete a mandatory 20-hour training and regular in-services.

How quickly can the intake/admissions staff come to begin the admissions process? Is someone available at nights or on weekends?

Some hospices are able to begin the admissions process and have someone begin hospice services at night or on weekends. If you are referred to hospice late in the day or on the weekend, a hospice's ability to start services quickly might be very important.

We are available to admit on nights and weekends, and can admit a patient within an hour of receiving physicians' orders.

What is the organization's governance structure?

Whether or not the organization is a non-profit, for-profit, government, faith-based or part of a larger healthcare organization may be important to you and your family.

We are an independent, non-profit organization, serving Guilford, Forsyth, Davidson and Randolph counties since 1981.

Is the hospice a We Honor Veterans Partner?

We Honor Veterans Partners have demonstrated their commitment to improving the care they provide to Veterans and their family members.

Yes.

For information about Hospice of the Piedmont or to make a referral, call 336.889.8446 or visit www.hospiceofthepiedmont.org.



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