What is Hospice?

A special kind of care for dying people, their families and their caregivers that;

- Treats the physical needs of patients and their emotional and spiritual needs
- Takes place in the patient’s home, or in a home-like setting
- Concentrates on making patients as free of pain and as comfortable as they want to be so they can make the most of the time that remains to them
- Considers helping family members an essential part of its mission
- Believes the quality of life to be as important as the length of life

Who uses hospice?

More than a million patients and their families have utilized the services of hospice (pronounced “HOS-pis”).

Some 60 percent of all hospice patients have cancer, and many of the rest have either heart disease or AIDS. However, regardless of a patient’s condition – or age – hospices open their doors and their hearts to all terminally ill persons.

Many surviving family members say, “I do not know what I would have done without hospice.” And many credit it with helping to make their final days with their loved ones warm and memorable.

What services does a hospice provide?

No job is too big or too small for the hospice team – it helps in every way it can.

Hospice services may include:

- Pain relief through medication
- Back rubs and foot massages
- Matters of personal cleanliness and coordination of necessary medical equipment
- “Being there” – to let the patient know he or she is not alone
- Talking openly about feelings assisting with household chores and helping to put financial matters in order
- Providing favorite foods or music
• Joining in favorite pastimes

Though hospice professionals and volunteers are there to help, they encourage patients to be as active and to do as much for themselves as possible.

**What hospice services does Medicare cover?**

When a Medicare-eligible patient receives services from a Medicare-approved hospice, Medicare pays almost the entire cost.

In general, coverage includes:

• Physician services
• Nursing care
• Medical appliances and supplies as appropriate
• Drugs for symptom management and pain relief
• Short-term inpatient and respite care
• Homemaker services and home health aid
• Physical and other therapies
• Counseling