

## **Hospice Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is involved with the hospice admissions process?**

The admission to hospice begins with a call to our office. As needed, our staff will visit the home to answer questions and determine the appropriate services to meet your needs. There is no charge for this service. The official admission is begun when a hospice staff member comes to the client's home or residence to help the client complete the required paperwork and consent forms.

### **Is a hospice client required to have less than six months to live in order to be eligible for hospice?**

Although hospice care is intended for the final six months of life, hospice care is not discontinued if a client lives beyond that time. Jefferson Healthcare Hospice is responsible for determining at regular intervals whether the client meets the hospice criteria and will plan with the client and family if the situation improves and hospice is no longer required.

### **Does hospice treat only cancer clients?**

Hospice provides care to those who are in their final months of life. This may include clients with cancer, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, dementia, or other life-threatening diseases. Some elderly clients have no specific illness but are experiencing a combination of weight loss and general decline called "failure to thrive."

### **Can a hospice client who is showing improvement be returned to regular medical treatment?**

If, at any time, a client decides to change his or her approach from comfort-oriented care to a treatment or curative approach, he or she may revoke the Medicare, Medicaid, or other hospice insurance benefits and reinstate regular benefits.

### **Does it take a lot of friends and family to care for a client at home?**

Being a caregiver can be emotionally demanding, physically challenging, and sometimes overwhelming. For this reason, the decision to become a caregiver should not be taken lightly. See the Information for Caregivers section.

### **How does hospice help with pain?**

Hospice workers are experienced in finding the appropriate medications to achieve the pain level that the client is seeking. Acceptable pain levels are individually determined by the client with the help of the hospice nurse and the physician. We also use non-pharmacological methods such as massage or music therapies to improve relaxation and comfort. Most clients will be able to find a level of pain control that leaves them comfortable and provides the desired quality of life.