

VOLUNTEER vs MEDICALLY CERTIFIED HOSPICE

Hospice SLO County is a Non-Medical Volunteer Hospice and Community Grief Center.

VOLUNTEER HOSPICE (uncommon)

- May be self-referred.
- May qualify at any time after being diagnosed with a life limiting illness. Clients and families may continue with services as long as there is a need.
- May continue to receive curative and experimental medical care and treatments.
- Non-medical focus. Clients remain under the medical care of their own physician.
- Clients are not charged for services, and no insurer is billed. The cost of care is supported by community donations and fundraisers.
- Hospice trained volunteers provide all in-home services. Paid staff train and supervise volunteers, programs, and services.
- Focus on providing emotional comfort and companionship for client and respite care for the caregiver.
- Volunteer presence, if requested, during the final days/hours of active dying.
- Does not provide any medical or nursing care and does not require a license.
- Grief counseling is offered at any time, after any death including for anticipatory grief.
- The State Attorney General Monitors Operations.

MEDICALLY CERTIFIED HOSPICE (common)

- Requires a physician referral.
- Patients admitted within 6 months of their expected end of life.
- Patients must discontinue curative treatment.
- Nursing and medical care are under the direction of hospice physicians and medical care is focused on comfort.
- Medicare or private insurance companies are billed by the hospice provider; must follow stringent Federal guidelines.
- Services provided by paid staff including nurses, physical therapists, social workers, aides, music, and spiritual support. Some in-home volunteer support available.
- Grief counseling is available after the patient dies for up to a year.

VOLUNTEER HOSPICE STANDARDS

- Provide free services to all clients.
- Offer services in partnership with all health care agencies in the community and is not exclusive to anyone.
- Provide an organized program of bereavement care to anyone in the community who are dealing with grief issues regardless of when, where, or how the death occurred.
- Provide community education regarding end of life, dying, death, and grief.