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## WHAT IS HOSPICE?

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Hospice is useful medical, nursing, spiritual, emotional, and personal care for people who have learned that they probably have six months or less to live. It is for those who are not receiving curing treatments any longer, but would like to be as comfortable as possible.



Many changes often happen toward the end of life—changes in medications, appetite, strength, family roles, pain and other symptoms. Hospice deals with each of these changes as they occur, helping to keep your life as normal as possible.

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## LIVING LONGER

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Pathways Hospice does not do anything to shorten or lengthen your life, but research has found that with the extra care of hospice, people live an average of a month longer.

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## WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?

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You and your family are in charge when you have hospice. You and your doctor guide the hospice team so they can provide care in a way that is best for you and your family.

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## WHO PAYS FOR HOSPICE?

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Pathways Hospice is paid for by Medicare, Medi-Cal, all HMOs, and private insurance. If your health insurance is Medicare, Medi-Cal or a senior HMO, hospice care will be free to you; you are entitled to the extra care of hospice.

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## HOW DOES IT WORK?

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Pathways Hospice is provided by a team of healthcare professionals. A nurse visits you regularly where you live, and you can choose to have visits from other team members if you wish. Other team members include:

- A volunteer can give companionship, do errands, or give caregivers a break.
- A social worker can help with insurance issues, funeral planning, counseling and coordinating other support.
- A spiritual care counselor can listen, coordinate visits from someone in



the patient's own faith, or meditate with the patient or family.

- A home health aide can help with bathing and personal care.
- A doctor and pharmacist are also part of the team, making sure your care is the best, even if you do not see them in person.

Team members visit according to the patient's needs. Typically, the nurse will visit two or three times a week. While she is there, she may do nursing tasks, such as change a dressing. But she will also teach caregivers what they need to know about caring for their loved one at home. Hospice does not provide all day or all night care, but a nurse is available by telephone and can send a visit nurse if needed.

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## BEREAVEMENT

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When a loved one passes on, many people need support. Pathways Hospice provides counseling, support groups, newsletters and other support for grieving friends and family.



