



Choosing a Quality Hospice for Yourself or Your Loved Ones

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization has created this list of questions to help you select a qualified hospice provider.

Q: Is the Hospice Medicare Certified?

A: Hospice of Spokane is Medicare and Medicaid certified.

Q: Has the hospice been surveyed by a state or federal oversight agency in the last five years?

A: Hospice of Spokane was last surveyed by the state in 2006. We received an A+ grade with no deficiencies.

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

A: Hospice of Spokane is a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. It is also a part of the Quality Partners Initiative and part of the We Honor Veterans Program. We comply with all aspects of NHPCO's Standards for Hospice Programs.

Q: Is the hospice accredited by a national organization?

A: Hospice of Spokane uses accredited durable medical equipment providers as well as accredited pharmacies. We are also a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's Quality Partners Initiative and Washington State Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Q: Does the hospice conduct a family evaluation survey?

A: Yes. Family evaluation surveys are mailed to all client family members 5-6 weeks after the death of the client. We also survey clients 2 weeks after starting hospice care.

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

A: Hospice of Spokane provides care to clients wherever they are. Whether that is a hospital, nursing home, adult family home, assisted living facility or their own residence. We also have a 12-bed facility, the Hospice House, where we can provide care to clients who are no longer able to stay home.

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

A: Many of Hospice of Spokane's nursing staff are certified in hospice and palliative nursing. Our medical director has a Certificate of Added Qualifications in Hospice and Palliative Medicine from the American Board of Family Medicine.

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

A: Volunteers provide a variety of services to our clients, including: respite, grocery shopping, running errands, preparing meals, cutting hair, home maintenance assistance, visiting with Delta-certified pets or therapy dogs, massage (licensed massage therapy and reiki), holding vigil, visiting and much more. Often times, we are able to fill volunteer requests within 24 hours, though most requests are less urgent.

Q: Will staff come to the home if there is a crisis at any time of the day or night and on weekends? Who is available to make the home visit (nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains)?

A: Nurses are available for consultation and visits 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our medical director is available for consultation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All of the interdisciplinary team members visit clients in their homes.

Q: If I need to go to a hospital or nursing home which one does/doesn't the hospice work with?

A: Hospice of Spokane works with all hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities and retirement communities in our service area which includes Spokane, Pend Oreille, Ferry and Stevens counties.

Q: What "extra" services does the hospice offer?

A: Hospice of Spokane offers a variety of services. We work with your doctor to determine your plan of care. Our medical director oversees your plan of care and consults with the hospice team if difficulties arise. A registered nurse and a medical social worker will be assigned to your needs. Chaplains are available to provide spiritual care if desired. Nurse aides assist with personal care, such as bathing, hair care and other needs. Volunteers provide a number of services to clients on care and their families. Bereavement counselors provide counseling to clients' family members, and friends and for any community member experiencing grief from the death of a loved one, free of charge. Prescription medications, medical equipment and medical supplies related to the client's terminal illness are provided by Hospice of Spokane. Dietary counseling and respiratory, physical, occupational and speech therapy are available if needed. Hospice of Spokane offers a number of grief support programs as well as a special bereavement group for children and their families dealing with the death of a loved one as well as a free grief camp for children ages 7-15 during the last weekend in July every year. We also have massage therapy as well as therapy dogs who are available to visit clients.

Q: How long has the hospice been operating in the community?

A: Hospice of Spokane was one of the first hospices in the nation, and has been serving patients since 1977.

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

A: On average nurses are assigned anywhere between 10 and 12 patients at a time, while Medical Social Workers are assigned anywhere between 20 and 25 patients at a time. These are on par with national averages for hospice organizations.

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

A: Hospice of Spokane volunteers must go through a complete background check as well as 24 hours of training before they are placed with patients and families. Training covers many topics including: imminent signs of approaching death; HIPPA – Privacy Guidelines; respecting human differences; transfers, falls and infection control; and communication skills.

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

A: An intake or admissions staff person can begin the admissions process with you over the phone and a member of the admissions team will come to you to complete the process wherever is convenient for your situation. Admissions nurses work into the evenings as well as on weekends.

Q: What is the organizations governance structure?

A: Hospice of Spokane is governed by a board of community volunteers.