

Best Practice...

in Palliative Care

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOME HEALTH

The emergence of palliative care as an option for seriously ill patients and the perception of similarity to home health services has many health care providers asking - *what are the differences between palliative care and home health?*

The fundamental difference between the two care options is that home health is designed for short-term interventions with a focus on rehabilitation. Palliative care is a longer-term option addressing continuity of care across the spectrum of a patient's illness.

Criteria for patient use of each program are highlighted below:

Home Health

- Short-term/intermittent skilled nursing care, physical therapy or speech language pathology
- Homebound - patient must be home except to go out for doctor's visits
- Under physician's care plan
- Receive services from a Medicare participating home health agency

Palliative Care

- Longer-term/continuous skilled nursing care
- Address physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs and expectations

- Patient is not required to be homebound
- Under physician's care plan
- Private pay reimbursement for services

The following example is used to illustrate when home health and palliative care services may be appropriate for a patient.

Patient History: Patient is diabetic and has experienced amputation of the lower right leg.

Care Options:

- **Home Health.** Should the patient elect home health care following amputation and release from the hospital, this is for a short-term rehabilitative period. Once the patient's home health benefit runs out, the patient has the option to elect palliative care.
- **Palliative Care.** The patient may elect palliative care immediately following amputation and release from the hospital. Palliative care would then continue until the patient elects to discharge from the program.

For more information, visit our website at www.unityhospice.org

Did you know?

There are several websites that address clinical and program issues related to hospice and palliative care.

In fact, most of the information shared in Best Practices is taken from Fast Facts, a publication found on the EPERC website.

www.eperc.mcw.edu

www.nhpco.org

www.capc.org

Best Practice is a publication for physicians, printed quarterly by Unity. To share your comments, please call Rance Hafner, MD at 920.338.1111.



LEADERS IN HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

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