

## Montgomery Hospice: what we do and how we help

### *What is hospice?*

Hospice is care that focuses on medical and personal comfort for people living with a life-limiting illness.

Hospice care helps patients with physical symptoms like pain or nausea. Hospice staff members also comfort patients, families and friends by helping them feel emotionally and spiritually at peace. They work together with patients and families to bring dignity and well-being to anyone affected by illness and loss.

### *What is Montgomery Hospice?*

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit organization that has been providing hospice care to people in Montgomery County for 30 years. We are the largest hospice in the county. Besides hospice services, we provide professional grief support for anyone who lives in the county. In 2010, Montgomery Hospice cared for more than 1,900 patients and their families, and provided grief education and support to 7,900 Montgomery County residents.

### *Who is Montgomery Hospice?*

The people of Montgomery Hospice are professionals and volunteers who work together as a team to meet the needs of our neighbors who are living with a terminal illness. The professionals include doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, spiritual counselors (chaplains), social workers, certified nursing assistants and grief counselors.

*Is Montgomery Hospice affiliated with a religious group?* No.

*Is Montgomery Hospice part of the Montgomery County government?*

No.

*Whom does Montgomery Hospice care for?*

Montgomery Hospice helps our seriously ill neighbors in Montgomery County who have decided (after talking with their doctors) to concentrate on living their lives as fully as possible rather than aggressively fighting a disease.

*Is hospice only for people with cancer?*

No.

Montgomery Hospice can help patients with any illness (including cancer, dementia, heart disease and others).

*Do patients pay for hospice?*

No.

*Hospice services are paid for by:*

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- most private insurance companies, or by
- Montgomery Hospice. We care for patients without insurance or any other way to pay.

*Why do patients choose hospice?*

Patients choose hospice when it becomes clear that a cure is no longer likely, and they want comfort care so they can live as fully as possible until the end of life. For some patients, hospice can be an alternative to staying in – or returning to – a hospital.



*Where do patients receive hospice care?*

Montgomery Hospice usually cares for patients and families in their own homes, wherever they live. Besides houses and apartments, we care for patients in assisted living facilities and nursing homes, and also at Casey House, the only health care facility in Montgomery County exclusively designed for hospice patients.

*What services are provided by Montgomery Hospice?*

- Expert pain and symptom relief
- Medications
- Medical equipment, such as oxygen, wheelchairs, walkers and hospital beds
- Medical supplies
- Nurses available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Assistance with patient personal care
- Grief support

*Who cares for the patient?*

The team of people that work together to care for the patient includes doctors, nurses, certified nursing assistants, social workers, spiritual counselors (chaplains) and volunteers.

*Will the Montgomery Hospice doctor visit the patient?*

Yes. If necessary, the Montgomery Hospice doctor will visit a patient's home.

**What do Montgomery Hospice nurses do?** The nurses visit patients regularly to see how they are doing, teach caregivers how to take care of their loved ones, and coordinate the visits of other Montgomery Hospice team members.

**What is a certified nursing assistant?**

A certified nursing assistant is a trained nursing aide who has passed a state certification exam. Our CNAs visit patients periodically to help with things such as bathing and helping patients move around safely.

**What does the Montgomery Hospice social worker do?**

Montgomery Hospice social workers help patients and families learn coping skills and ways to keep patients comfortable in their homes. They also can help patients and families with difficult conversations or to work on practical tasks, such as arranging for help with chores.

**What does a chaplain do?**

For patients who are interested, Montgomery Hospice spiritual counselors (chaplains) are available to talk about spiritual concerns. Our chaplains help people find comfort and answers that fit their own beliefs. Chaplains offer spiritual support to people of any faith background, or no faith background, and help people find their own answers.

**What do Montgomery Hospice volunteers do?** After a thorough three-day training, volunteers help in a variety of ways such as visiting with patients so caregivers can take a break, giving soothing hand massages, running errands or helping patients with email, letters or memoirs. Volunteers are required to attend ongoing training during the year.

**How are decisions made about the care of the patient?**

Montgomery Hospice respects and honors the wishes of our patients. Their priorities guide us.

**Are patients' family doctors still involved when a patient chooses hospice?**

Yes. Patients can keep their own doctors while receiving hospice care.

**Do Montgomery Hospice patients have to stop all medications?** No.

**What happens if a hospice patient has an accident and breaks a leg, would that break be treated?** Yes.

**Does hospice hasten death?**

No. In some cases, hospice helps patients live longer.

**What should patients or families do if they are considering hospice care, or if they have questions about hospice?**

- Ask their doctor to discuss all their options, which may include hospice
- Call for information or ask us to visit them to provide information
- Call with questions. Montgomery Hospice wants families to fully understand their options and will respect any decision made.

**Can patients who sign up for hospice care change their mind?** Yes. Patients can stop hospice care whenever they want, for whatever reason.

**Do patients ever leave hospice care?** Yes. Some patients improve and leave hospice.

**What is Casey House?**

Casey House is a warm, home-like facility designed for hospice patients. Patients who cannot be cared for at

home may go to Casey House to get symptoms under control. Casey House also has doctors, nurses, certified nursing assistants, social workers, chaplains and volunteers.

**How is Casey House different from other facilities?** Casey House has a highly skilled team of professionals who are experts in end-of-life care. Patients have private bedrooms with personal bathrooms. Adult, children and pet visitors are welcome 24 hours a day.

**What is grief? What is bereavement? How does Montgomery Hospice help?** Grief is the intense feeling of sadness felt after the death of a loved one. The word "bereavement" is very similar, referring to that period of sadness. Montgomery Hospice has counselors with advanced professional degrees who support families for 13 months after their loved one dies. This free support includes phone counseling, groups, workshops and mailings.

**How does Montgomery Hospice help the community with grief?**

Montgomery Hospice support groups and workshops are free to anyone who lives in Montgomery County. Montgomery Hospice also provides education about grief to community groups, to employees in the workplace, and to students in high schools.

**Montgomery  
HOSPICE**

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