

# Montgomery HOSPICE

comfort care when you need it most



## ***How can we refer a patient to hospice?***

Anyone can make a hospice referral, including family, friends or the person who is ill. Once we are contacted, we call the patient or family to ask gentle questions that help us learn about the situation, and we may offer an informational visit. A patient can enter hospice when the patient or patient representative, plus two doctors (Montgomery Hospice's and one other) agree hospice is appropriate.



## ***What if we're not sure about choosing hospice?***

If patients or families would like, we can visit to introduce ourselves and explain the care we offer. We understand that this can be a difficult choice, and there is never pressure to make any decision.

## ***What if we change our minds about hospice care?***

Patients and families can change their minds at any time and can select other care for any reason.



## ***What is Hospice?***

Hospice is care that focuses on medical and personal comfort for people in the last months, weeks or days of life. We call hospice comfort care because we help patients with physical symptoms like pain or nausea. We also comfort patients, families and friends by helping them feel emotionally and spiritually at peace.

## ***Why do patients choose hospice care?***

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.

## ***What is a Medical Hospice?***

Being a medical hospice means that Montgomery Hospice unites doctors, nurses, home health aides, counselors and trained volunteers into care teams. We work together with patients and families to bring dignity and well-being to anyone affected by illness and loss.



## ***Where is care provided?***

We usually care for patients and families in the comfort of their own homes. Our doctors, nurses and other caregivers make home visits wherever patients live. This includes assisted living facilities, nursing homes or Montgomery Hospice Casey House, our inpatient care center.

## ***Will our family doctor or specialist be involved?***

Yes. Your family doctor or specialist will be involved if you choose. If you do not have a doctor, our doctors and nurse practitioners are available to you.



## ***What else does hospice care include?***

In addition to managing pain or other symptoms, we help with practical needs like eating, bathing and making sure patients can rest or move around safely. We also provide emotional support and can help patients and families make plans for their care. To help families cope with loss, our counselors can stay in touch with a patient's loved ones for more than a year after the patient's death.

## ***What if we cannot care for our loved one at home?***

Montgomery Hospice has close ties with many assisted living centers and nursing homes in the county. We partner with nurses and other professionals in these facilities, bringing more eyes, hands and experience to patient and family care.

If a patient is being discharged from a hospital with symptoms that require constant care, we may suggest Casey House, our inpatient hospice center. If a patient receiving hospice care at home has symptoms that become severe, we also may recommend a short stay at Casey House to bring symptoms under control.

## ***What role do families and friends play?***

Many families and friends care for their loved one at home or elsewhere. We support families and friends with our whole team, which includes doctors, nurses, home health aides, counselors and trained volunteers. Our role is to help patients, families and friends make the most of their time together.



*“Montgomery Hospice created a circle of comfort around us. They helped Mom with her pain and their volunteers took care of many errands. That made it possible for us to spend sweet time with her before she passed away. Their counselors were there through all of it and even afterwards as we made peace with her death.”*

daughter of a patient

## ***What kind of emotional and spiritual support do you offer?***

Our counselors help patients and families develop coping skills and ease worries over how an illness will progress. We also help with difficult conversations that patients and families may want to have but may not know how to start. Many people ask our advice on questions of meaning and purpose; others seek help with funeral or memorial services. We offer spiritual support to people of any faith background, and our counselors help people find their own answers.

## ***What about support for families after a loved one has died?***

Our professional counselors offer grief support for more than a year after a patient has died. We contact family members regularly, and our counselors are available by phone, weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Our regular mailings include self-help materials that help families and friends cope with loss. We also offer a variety of grief workshops and support groups for all ages, including special groups for children and teens who have lost parents or siblings.

## ***How do we pay for hospice?***

Many patients get coverage for hospice through Medicare, Medicaid or the hospice benefit included in their health plan.

The Medicare Hospice Benefit includes:

home visits by doctors, nurses, home health aides, social workers, counselors and chaplains

medicines to control pain and symptoms related to the hospice diagnosis (the illness that is the patient's reason for being in hospice)

durable equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers and hospital beds

disposable supplies, such as bandages and sterile pads

A Medicare patient's drug plan (Medicare Part D) may pay for medicines not related to the hospice diagnosis. Coverage for conditions not linked to the patient's hospice illness may also be covered by Medicare.

Coverage by Medicaid and most private insurance is similar to the Medicare Hospice Benefit. The Montgomery Hospice Foundation funds the care of patients who have no other way of paying for care.



## ***When should we call Montgomery Hospice?***

We can best help patients and families when there is time to plan. With enough time, we can make patients as comfortable as possible and help them, their families and friends make choices.

***“I am glad we called for help when we did. We had enough time to say what needed to be said and to have our friends come visit. It helped all of us feel more at peace.”***

**wife of a patient**

*to gentle the journey through serious illness  
and loss with skill and compassion*

## **Montgomery Hospice Mission**

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Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit, medical hospice that has served patients at the end of life and their loved ones since 1981. We offer services throughout Montgomery County, but are independent of the county and state government.

We care for patients at the end of life regardless of their ability to pay. Our work is funded by generous gifts from local residents, businesses and civic groups, as well as by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

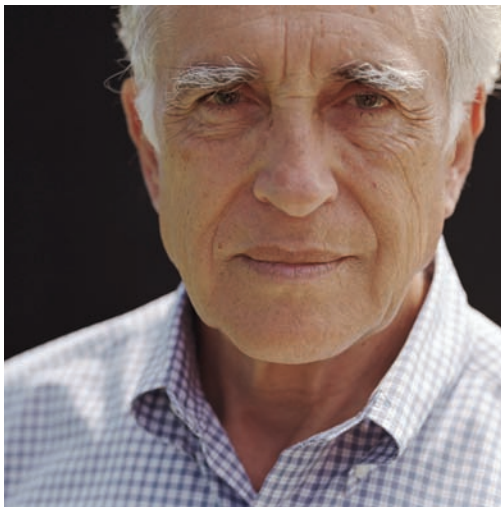
Montgomery Hospice Foundation raises and manages the funds that make the work of Montgomery Hospice possible.

Every year, seriously ill and grieving people throughout Montgomery County find comfort through our *Hospice at Home* service, *Casey House* inpatient facility, our *Bereavement Care* program.



*“At 2:00 a.m. my wife woke up in extreme pain and I wasn’t sure what to do. I talked to a Montgomery Hospice nurse by phone – and then she came over to be sure, but mostly to calm me. Knowing that I could call anytime was so important and helped me decide to take care of my wife at home at the end of her life.”*

**husband of patient**



Joint Commission  
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Medicare and Medicaid certified

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**Montgomery  
HOSPICE**

to gentle the journey...