

Hospice Care for Patients with COPD and Other Forms of Lung Disease



VITAS[®]
Healthcare

When is the right time to ask about hospice?

People with lung disease who are considering hospice typically have one primary concern: “What happens if I can’t breathe? I’ve always gone to the hospital before. Who will be there to help me?” The VITAS team will develop an individual respiratory plan that outlines specific interventions for respiratory distress. This plan of action will get severe symptoms back under control, in the home. This “pre-emergency” plan gives patients and their loved ones a greater sense of control and security.

Hospice is designed to help during the last six months of life. Physicians use clinical guidelines to determine eligibility. But patients should be both physically and psychologically ready for hospice. VITAS assists patients who:

- Have made repeated trips to the emergency room (one or more times each quarter) due to infection or episodes of respiratory failure
- Have progressed to the point where they spend most of their days at home
- Have endured repeated hospitalization (one or more times each quarter) and no longer wish to be hospitalized
- No longer wish to be intubated

VITAS counsels patients and their families about their goals and alternative ways to manage symptoms to prevent unwanted hospitalization and intubation.



Types of lung disease

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is an umbrella term for the most common types of non-cancerous respiratory illnesses: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. There are other non-cancerous lung diseases that can be life limiting, including:

- Chronic asthma
- Bronchiectasis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Cystic fibrosis
- End-stage tuberculosis

Hospice for COPD and other forms of lung disease

Dyspnea (shortness of breath) and the anxiety it causes are distressing symptoms of lung disease. These can be treated using a combination of clinical therapies and the individual, 24-hour support that hospice offers. The VITAS plan of care also includes:

- Comprehensive evaluation by an interdisciplinary team
- Pre-emergency plan consistent with patient’s needs and goals
- Pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions to reduce episodes of respiratory distress
- 24-hour response upon onset of respiratory distress

All hospice organizations are reimbursed in the same way, so they do not compete on cost. It is the quality of service and spectrum of choices that differentiate one hospice from another.

VITAS does much more than manage the physical condition. We offer patients and families greater options and resources to address the enormous need that can accompany a terminal illness. Only hospice can implement a plan of care that provides:

- Emotional and spiritual support
- Medications, medical supplies and equipment related to the diagnosis
- Training so loved ones can assist in caring for the patient
- Grief support for surviving loved ones

Levels of hospice care

A pioneer in the field of end-of-life care, VITAS is proud to offer unsurpassed service across all four levels of hospice care:

- **Routine Home Care**—available wherever the patient calls home (residence, nursing home, assisted living community)
- **Intensive Comfort Care**® (continuous care)—medical management in the home for up to 24 hours per day when medically appropriate
- **Inpatient Care**—when medical needs cannot be managed at home
- **Respite Care**—allows the patient a brief inpatient admission to provide caregivers a “respite”

Who pays for VITAS services?

VITAS accepts Medicare, Medicaid/Medi-Cal, private insurance and other forms of reimbursement for its hospice services.

VITAS Healthcare can help.

Call us at 800.723.3233

or visit VITAS.com



Your VITAS care team

Because patients who have end-stage COPD have a broad range of needs, their care is coordinated by a highly trained interdisciplinary team:

- **Physician** who works with the patient’s primary care physician in controlling pain and symptoms
- **Registered nurse** who is skilled in assessing and managing pain
- **Social worker** who provides emotional support and helps with financial issues and planning
- **Hospice aide** who can help with personal care and hygiene, light housekeeping, light laundry and occasional shopping
- **Chaplain** who works with the patient’s own clergy and offers spiritual support
- **Community volunteer** trained by VITAS to offer time and companionship
- **Bereavement specialist** who offers grief and loss support and helps with memorial services and other care for loved ones

Download Our Free Hospice Discussion Guide



- Make the right decisions for you and your loved ones
 - Get answers to your hospice questions
 - Learn how to start the hospice conversation
- Find out more at HospiceCanHelp.com

For more information call 800.723.3233

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