



Hospice and Palliative Care: — **A Guide for Families**

If your loved one is experiencing a serious illness, call (334) 451-1693 to discuss palliative care or (334) 395-5000 to speak with Baptist Hospice.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARE
FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

QUESTIONS FROM
CAREGIVERS

PLANNING
FOR CARE

Choosing the Right Care

CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES WHEN HELPING A LOVED ONE WITH A LIFE-LIMITING ILLNESS. BAPTIST HEALTH OFFERS TWO LEVELS OF CARE THAT SUPPORT BOTH PATIENTS AND THEIR LOVED ONES IN NAVIGATING THE LOGISTICAL, EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF CHRONIC DISEASE AND END OF LIFE.

PALLIATIVE CARE: SUPPORT DURING LONG-TERM ILLNESS

Any person with a chronic disease can benefit from palliative care, which can occur at any stage of disease, for as long as necessary.

The Baptist Health palliative care team, which includes physicians, nurses, pastoral care and social workers, works with your loved one's doctors to develop a care plan that controls pain and manages symptoms during treatment.

Both patients and families benefit when palliative care begins as early as possible.

Caregivers have a better plan for moving forward. It's easy to feel overwhelmed when faced with the medical, financial and emotional impacts of a loved one's illness. Baptist Health's palliative care connects caregivers with supportive resources and helps them determine next steps.

Patients gain more strength. Baptist Health's pain management and supportive care enables patients to better tolerate treatment and carry on with their daily lives.

HOSPICE: COMFORT FOR END OF LIFE

When a doctor determines a patient has six months or less to live, the patient has the option of entering hospice. Our dedicated hospice team works to ease

“Each patient’s care plan begins with the patient’s and family’s goals for care, whether it be getting to a grandson’s graduation, having nails done weekly, or just staying at home and being comfortable.”

— Melissa Cobb, RN,
Admission Nurse at Baptist
Hospice

symptoms and allow the final days to pass in comfort and dignity. We work with families to alleviate the stress of caregiving and end-of-life planning so they can make the most of the days they have left with their loved one.

Baptist Hospice teams include an attending physician, medical director, registered nurse case manager, hospice aide, chaplain, social worker, bereavement coordinator and volunteers. Together, these teams:

- » Develop a care plan that adheres to your loved one's wishes
- » Emphasize comfort by treating pain and easing symptoms
- » Make regular visits to a patient's home
- » Help family members navigate emotional, spiritual and financial concerns
- » Evaluate a patient's home and provide caregivers with a list of resources to meet specific medical needs
- » Provide frequent updates to out-of-town family members about a loved one's condition
- » Treat patients regardless of their religion, illness or insurance status
- » Offer bereavement support for families for as long as 13 months after a loved one passes

Baptist Hospice is the only not-for-profit, faith-based, accredited hospice program in central Alabama. As such, we want to ensure every person in our area has a dignified end of life that meets his or her wishes.



Questions

From Caregivers

OVERSEEING A LOVED ONE'S CARE CAN BE DIFFICULT. HERE ARE SOME COMMON QUESTIONS BAPTIST HEALTH'S PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE PROVIDERS HEAR FROM FAMILIES.

Inpatient vs. Outpatient Hospice

Outpatient care means the hospice support team will come to the patient to provide care — whether he or she is in assisted living, a house or at a nursing home.

If symptoms become too difficult to manage at home, however, we also offer general inpatient care, in which continuous care and pain management are provided on-site at Baptist Health. Inpatient hospice care is often temporary and provided until a patient can return home.

When should I begin discussing palliative care with my loved one?

Palliative care can begin as soon as your loved one receives a diagnosis, but you may need to have this conversation if an existing condition, such as heart failure, takes a sudden turn for the worse. The earlier your loved one begins palliative care, the better.

When is the right time to start a conversation with my loved one about hospice?

People may be in need of hospice if they experience frequent hospitalizations or incontinence, are unable to care for themselves, and/or can't move about independently.

How can I make sure my loved one's end-of-life wishes are respected?

Make sure your loved one documents his or her wishes through forms known as advance directives. Common advance directives include a living will, a medical power of attorney form and a do-not-resuscitate order.

How will these services be paid for if the costs are not covered by my loved one's Medicare, Medicaid or health insurance?

Baptist Health will never send you or your loved one a bill if Medicare, Medicaid or health insurance does not cover the costs of hospice.

How can I make sure my loved one's finances are in order?

Your loved one can authorize you to assist with his or her finances through a durable power of attorney document. Your loved one will still be able to manage his or her finances after the form is signed, but you will be allowed to step in and handle financial affairs, such as paying bills, if he or she is unable to. Whether your loved one is receiving hospice or palliative care, a Baptist Health social worker can help you navigate a variety of financial issues, including power of attorney and insurance claims.

What is the difference between a durable power of attorney and a medical power of attorney?

A durable power of attorney allows you to make financial decisions for your loved one, whereas medical power of attorney allows you to make decisions regarding his or her healthcare.



Planning for Care

IT'S EASY TO FEEL OVERWHELMED WHEN A LOVED ONE ENTERS HOSPICE. THESE CHECKLISTS CAN GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS YOU'LL NEED FROM YOUR LOVED ONE TO HELP THE PROCESS GO SMOOTHLY.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

- Alabama Advance Directive for Health Care
- Contact information for all healthcare providers
- Complete medical history, including dates of exams, medical tests and treatments
- Healthcare proxy
- List of medications
- Living will
- Medical power of attorney form
- Medicare, Medicaid, long-term care and/or health insurance information

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Any sources of income (401k, mutual funds, pensions, retirement accounts, Social Security, stocks, etc.)
- Banking and credit card information
- Contact information for financial advisors and/or stockbrokers
- Car title, registration and insurance documents
- Homeowner's or renter's insurance information

- Information about any debts or liabilities, including amounts and deadlines
- Keys to any safe deposit boxes
- Life insurance policy
- Most recent tax return

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

- Contact information for attorneys and/or legal advisors
- Deeds to your loved one's home and any additional property holdings
- Durable power of attorney document
- Up-to-date wills and trusts

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Any personal or family birth, adoption, marriage, divorce and citizenship certificates
- Contact information for close friends, family members and spiritual advisors
- Funeral plans, if your loved one has specified any
- Military service records, if applicable
- Social Security number and card

Keeping Everyone Informed and Updated

Here are two tips to ensure documents are organized and shared with all the necessary parties:

Gather all documents into one place.

Whether you choose to store them electronically or in a basic three-ring binder, make sure the documents are accessible to yourself and other family members or caregivers. If you choose to store them in a safe deposit box, keep a copy in a file at home that you can access at any time.

Share them with the appropriate people.

Your loved one's attorney, healthcare providers, and medical power of attorney or healthcare proxy should have a copy of his or her advance directive. His or her attorney should also have an up-to-date copy of the will.

