

Questions About Hospice Care

A checklist of questions to ask as you try to find the right hospice service for your loved one.

Involvement with a hospice service can be a choice that you plan for, or one that comes up suddenly. Regardless, it helps to know the right questions to ask when shopping for hospice care.

Below are some of the most important questions you should ask when interviewing a hospice service. Before you go to an interview, print this list of questions, read over it, and identify the questions that are most important to you and your loved one. Take the sheet along with you, and jot down the answers during the interview.

If you go on several interviews, the answers to this questionnaire will allow you to more easily compare services and decide which is right for your loved one.

- 1) Is the agency accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body?
- 2) Is the program Medicare and/or Medicaid certified?
- 3) Does your state require hospice licensing? If so, is the service licensed?
- 4) Is there written documentation regarding the eligibility requirements, financial aspects, employee jobs, liability insurance, and general services of the hospice?
- 5) Will the agency provide references from other healthcare organizations?
- 6) Is the hospice service in good standing with the Better Business Bureau or State Attorney General's office?
- 7) How flexible is the hospice service in negotiating patient differences?
- 8) Does the agency work with the family to generate a professional plan of care for each patient? Will the service provide you with a copy of this plan?
- 9) Is this plan updated periodically or when the need arises?
- 10) Does the hospice require a primary caregiver?
- 11) Will the hospice work with the caregiver to cover job schedules, travel plans, or other responsibilities?
- 12) Does the service hold an evaluation to determine patient needs?
- 13) Does the service consider what the patient can do for him or herself?

- 14) How many personnel references does the agency require?
- 15) Are the hospice workers licensed and bonded?
- 16) Does the agency have a routine way of handling complaints?
- 17) How does the agency handle billing?
- 18) Will the agency help find financial assistance?
- 19) Are there payment plans available?
- 20) Does the agency have a 24 hour on-call service?
- 21) Did the hospice inform you of the patient's rights and responsibilities?
- 22) How quickly do hospice services begin?
- 23) What specialized services are available?
- 24) What are the policies regarding residential admission? Inpatient care?
- 25) What hospitals work closely with the residential facilities?

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