

# Choosing a Quality Hospice ...

## What You Should Know

Many people in the community do not realize they may (*and should*) choose which hospice provides end-of-life care for them or their loved ones.

To help you, the healthcare consumer, identify what qualities are important to you, The National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) developed a series of questions to ask. The questions and answers below

will help you determine how Hospice of Rockingham County compares to other hospices in the area, helping you choose the end-of-life care provider best suited to meeting the needs of you and your family members.

For more information about Hospice of Rockingham County, call our office at 336-427-9022 or visit our website at [www.hospiceofrockinghamcounty.com](http://www.hospiceofrockinghamcounty.com).

### Questions to ask:

#### **Is the hospice Medicare Certified?**

*Most hospices are certified by Medicare and are therefore required to follow Medicare rules and regulations. This is important if you wish to receive hospice care as part of your Medicare/Medicaid coverage.*

#### **Is the organization an NHPCO member and does it comply with all aspects of NHPCO's Standards for Hospice Programs?**

*Ask if the hospice is a current NHPCO member, if it complies with NHPCO's Standards and has completed the Standards Self Assessment, and if so, how recently they completed it.*

#### **Is the hospice accredited by a national organization?**

*Several organizations accredit hospices, surveying them to ensure they meet quality standards. Hospices are not required to be accredited but accreditation can be a reflection of its commitment to quality.*

#### **Does the hospice conduct a family evaluation survey?**

*Many hospices ask family members to complete a brief evaluation of their services after the death of a loved one. Ask for their most recent scores so you can see how previous patients and family members have rated their services.*

#### **Does the hospice own or operate a care facility to provide home-like care in a hospice residence, hospital, or nursing home?**

*This may be important to you if the care needed is complex and/or family caregivers cannot care for the person at home.*

#### **Are clinical staff (physicians, nurses, social workers) certified or credentialed in hospice and palliative care?**

*There are several credentials that hospice professionals can achieve based on their knowledge of hospice/palliative care and their educational experience.*

#### **What services do volunteers offer, and if requested, how quickly will a volunteer be available?**

*Volunteers can provide a variety of services including friendly visits, light household chores, running errands, personal care, etc. If you want a hospice volunteer, be sure to ask how quickly one can be assigned and how they match volunteers to meet your needs.*

### Hospice of Rockingham County's Responses:

**Yes. Hospice of Rockingham County is Medicare certified. Therefore, if you are Medicare eligible, the services, medications, and supplies related to the terminal diagnosis are covered by your Medicare benefit.**

**Yes. HRC is a long-time member of NHPCO. Along with Medicare Conditions of Participation and ACHC accreditation standards, HRC also utilizes NHPCO's Standards of Practice.**

**Yes. As an additional quality measure for our patients, their families, and the community, we *choose* to be accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) - most recently in 2018, again with recommended deemed status.**

**Yes. HRC contracts with an external firm that surveys the families we serve. Additionally, we survey patients' attending physicians.**

**Yes. As a full-service hospice, HRC opened its state-of-the-art hospice facility in 2007. The facility is centrally located in the county, which means less time spent commuting to another county to spend time with a patient.**

**Yes. Several members of HRC's clinical staff are certified in hospice and palliative care. All staff members are encouraged to seek additional credentialing.**

**Typically, volunteers may be matched with a patient within 48 hours of the request.**

**Will staff come to the home if there is a crisis at any time of the day or night and on weekends? Who is available to make the home visit?**

*Hospice staff are available by phone to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, some hospices offer limited in-home support on nights and weekends, while others are able to send staff out to a patient's home no matter when a crisis arises.*

**If I need to go to a hospital or nursing home, which ones does/doesn't the hospice work with?**

*If you have a preferred hospital or know that you may need to go to a nursing home, it's important to find out which ones the hospice has contracts with so they can continue to provide your hospice services in this different setting.*

**What "extra" services does the hospice offer?**

*All hospices provide expert medical care, emotional and spiritual care, medicines, medical supplies and equipment, volunteers and grief support after the death of a loved one. In addition to these services some hospices offer specialized programs for children, people with specific diseases, "pre-hospice" care for individuals not yet medically-ready for hospice care and other "extra" services that may benefit your family.*

**How long has the hospice been operating in the community?**

*Again, length of time in the community may be important to you and your family.*

**How many patients at any one time are assigned to each hospice staff member who will be caring for the patient?**

*Some hospices assign a certain number of patients to each staff member and may be willing to share that information with you. That might influence your decision to receive care from a hospice.*

**What screening and type of training do hospice volunteers receive before they are placed with patients and families?**

*All volunteer must receive training or orientation on hospice care. Some hospices provide specialized training related to bereavement, pediatric care, nursing home care, etc.*

**How quickly can the intake/admissions staff come to begin the admissions process? Is someone available at nights or on weekends?**

*Some hospices are able to begin the admissions process and have someone begin hospice services at night or on weekends. If you are referred to hospice late in the day or on the weekend, a hospice's ability to start services quickly might be very important.*

**What is the organization's governance structure?**

*Whether or not the organization is a non-profit, for-profit, government, faith-based or part of a larger healthcare organization may be important to you and your family.*

**Is the hospice a We Honor Veterans Partner?**

*We Honor Veterans Partners have demonstrated their commitment to improving the care they provide to Veterans and their families.*

**Yes. Our on-call number (336-427-9028) is available 24/7/365. Caregivers typically receive a call from a Hospice nurse within 10 minutes of calling the after-hours line and if a home visit is needed, a hospice nurse usually arrives within an hour.**

**NOTE: When a loved one needs a hospice nurse or their caregiver has questions, response time is of the utmost importance.**

**HRC is contracted with both local hospitals, the hospitals in the Cone Health system, as well as Forsyth and Baptist. We are also contracted with the five long-term care facilities in Rockingham County, as well as others outside the county.**

**HRC offers their Supportive Care Program for those not quite ready for hospice care. In addition, their grief and bereavement services are offered to anyone in the community in need of support, regardless of any prior connection with HRC. HRC also hosts a free grief camp for children in the community each spring.**

**Hospice of Rockingham County has been serving patients in Rockingham County and the surrounding area since 1987. Our offices are centrally located in the county, facilitating rapid response to referrals as well as on-call needs.**

**HRC utilizes the national benchmarks set forth by NHPCO in determining each discipline's caseload.**

**All HRC patient care volunteers must complete a 12-hour training course and submit to background checks and drug screenings.**

**After a referral is received and terminal prognosis is verified with the patient's physician (using Medicare criteria), admission can be scheduled. Under normal circumstances, patients are admitted within 24 hours of referral, and often can be done the same day referral is received. Staff is also available for night /weekend admissions. Admissions to our hospice facility are also done after hours/on weekends.**

**HRC is an independent, not-for-profit hospice, founded in 1987. HRC is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees with representatives from across the county, including those from business and private sectors.**

**Yes. HRC recently joined this program, and we are in the planning stages.**

**For more information about Hospice of Rockingham County or to make a referral, call (336) 427-9028 or visit our website at [www.hospiceofrockinghamcounty.com](http://www.hospiceofrockinghamcounty.com).**

