



Selecting a Hospice Provider: Questions to Ask, Answers to Seek

Making the decision to work with a hospice comes at a vulnerable and difficult time. There may be several hospices that serve your community and choosing the one that fits your loved one's particular needs and desires is an important aspect of care that cannot be overstated. So, how do you know which hospice is right for you? First, determine which hospice agencies meet your needs geographically – that is, which are the agencies that serve your community. You can do this by finding a provider on this website at www.ghpco.org/directory.html - simply enter the name of the county in which you live and a list of the hospice members of the state association will appear alphabetically. There may be quite a few depending on your county of residence but don't let that slow you down. Next, you will want to contact each agency you've selected and ask to speak to an admissions counselor. The following list of questions can be used to further refine your list of provider choices and help you to make the final determination of who will work with your loved one. You can also access a list of resources at www.caringinfo.org for additional help.

1. Is the agency licensed and certified by the State of Georgia? Yes No
2. When was the last time the agency was surveyed by the State's regulatory group?
(should not be longer than 5 years)
3. Is the agency accredited by a nationally-recognized accrediting body? (not required) Yes No
4. What services are provided by the agency?
5. What kind of support is available to the family?
6. What does hospice do to ensure the patient is comfortable?
7. What do volunteers do for hospice patients and families?
8. How quickly are services accessible on weekends or during the night?
9. What access is there to in-patient hospice care if needed?
10. How long does the admission process take?
11. Are there references available?
12. What if there is a problem – who can you call and what is the procedure for resolving concerns?
13. What are the patient's rights and responsibilities and what are the hospice's responsibilities?
14. How is hospice paid for and what does it cover?

The hospice admission counselor should be willing and able to answer all questions. If the admissions person does not know, then they should find out the answer to share with you. This is an important decision for you and your loved one and the hospice should demonstrate understanding and compassion for the situation you face by helping you select an agency that meets the basic Medicare certification requirements as listed on GHPCO's website. Please contact **877-924-6073** if you have questions about hospice.