

## The Hospice Care Team

*“My patient is in hospice... I have no clue what is going on with them.” “They have vanished into a black box.” “I have been their doctor a long time; now I do not see them but have to make decisions for them.” “All these prescriptions for control meds have to be faxed? Again?” “Another form to be signed?” “I did not know they died.”*

*Sound familiar? These are some of the questions and concerns that attending physicians and providers have voiced. Attending physicians caring for patients in hospice retain a critically important and influential role for the patient/family/caregivers and are an essential part of the hospice team.*

### Consider the following:

- **Attending physicians/providers remain in control of treatment and management of the patient; they are part of the hospice care team.**
  - **Attending to the following helps ensure that patients receive necessary medications for comfort and a peaceful death:**
- Sign comfort medication orders in a timely manner
- Sign care plans in a timely manner. Hospice services cannot be billed until care plans are signed and returned by providers
- Review medication lists to determine if the medication is still beneficial to the patient
- Consider reduced dosages or discontinuing medications that increase the risk of fall, weakness, or weight loss in terminally frail patients
- Offer insight to the hospice team with challenging clinical or social circumstances

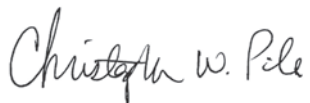
- **Attending physicians/providers need frequent and timely updates on their patients.**
    - **Please fill out a “Physician/Provider Preference Form” to specify how you want communications. If you have not filled one out (or are not sure you did), please contact our Community Relations Department at 540-776-0198.**
  - **Attending physicians/providers can request our hospice medical directors to assist in comfort care management (see request check box at the bottom of routine orders).**
    - **Our medical directors can write/fax/sign orders for Schedule II meds, comfort kits and medications on our routine hospice orders for each of your patients and manage comfort care if needed—especially helpful on nights, weekends or holidays. Update of management changes will be sent per above preference.**
  - **Attending physicians/providers need to be notified of patient deaths. The method and timeliness of this notification is directed by the information provided to us on the “Physician/Provider Preference Form.”**
- Your presence and participation in the care of your patients and families indicates you have not abandoned them, that they are well cared for at a time when stress and grief is intense. As patients and families learn to trust us, they are strengthened by the knowledge that their physician/provider, who knows them well, is an integral part of the hospice team.

We appreciate and rely on you. Call us. We want to hear your concerns and do whatever it takes to give you the assurance that the care we provide to your patients is excellent, compassionate, and professional. Your patients matter. You matter. Thank you for joining us to make a difference to affirm life in the midst of illness and grief.

*Thank you for joining us to make a difference – to affirm life in the midst of illness and grief.*



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