



**HUMMINGBIRD  
HOSPICE**  
BECAUSE EVERY MOMENT MATTERS

## Hospice Care for Kidney Failure/Renal Failure Patients

If you or a loved one is fighting kidney disease, you may feel like your ongoing search for answers and support will never end. Even once the decision has been made to end dialysis treatments, that need for comfort and care continues. Making a choice to discontinue or step back the level of medicare treatments affects everyone. It can be helpful to have a list of the right questions to ask about hospice care:

- When should hospice care be considered?
- How can hospice care support a patient in renal failure?
- How can hospice support that patient's family?
- What are all the benefits that hospice care can offer?
- What is the best way to open a discussion of hospice care with loved ones?



### **When Should Hospice Care be Considered?**

Regardless of how expert a patient's physician is or how loving and supportive the family has been, there can come a time when dialysis is more of a burden than a help for all concerned. Even if the patient has opted out of ongoing dialysis treatments, their medical needs remain, as do their personal concerns and hopes. Families often find themselves in a similar dilemma with medical questions and personal pain to cope with. Hospice care is comfort care that supports both the patient and their loved ones through the end stages of renal failure, including physical, mental, emotional and (if desired) spiritual support.

For all intents and purposes, a patient typically moves to hospice care when the prognosis indicates six or fewer months left to live. For patients who opt out of further dialysis treatments, their prognosis will depend on a number of factors, including severity of illness, amount of any remaining kidney function and other medical factors. The treating physician should be the one to determine approximate remaining time left.

### **How to Request an Evaluation for Hospice**

The nephrologist (kidney specialist) or treating family physician can make a recommendation for hospice care. Patients and loved ones can also request an evaluation and act as their own advocate for moving to hospice care. It is also perfectly fine to request an evaluation for purposes of knowing more about what hospice care can provide when the time comes.



## **How can Hummingbird Support a Patient with Renal Failure?**

Our care team will follow the patient's progress closely once the transition to hospice care has been made. Once the patient moves to hospice care, the focus shifts from curative to comfort care, with the goal being to make remaining time as comfortable and peaceful as possible for both the patient and their loved ones. The Hummingbird Hospice care team can provide full care for kidney failure patients.

### **Control of pain and symptoms**

Pain/symptom management experts will work with the patient to alleviate pain and symptoms such as stiffness, fatigue, nausea, breathing difficulties, itching, loss of appetite, sleep difficulties, depression, anxiety and other related symptoms. The goal is to enhance enjoyment of the time remaining by controlling daily discomforts.

### **Hospice care at home**

Hummingbird Hospice bring the care to you. Patients will receive care wherever they call home, whether it be their personal residence, assisted living facility, hospital or nursing home.

### **A coordinated care plan for every level**

The patient's regular care team (nephrologist, treating family physician, etc.) will develop a plan of care along with the hospice team. A Registered Nurse Case Manager will be appointed to ensure clear communications between all members of the care teams. The hospice team will coordinate administration of medications and will procure all the supplies and equipment required to manage the patient's diagnosis.

### **24/7 assistance:**

we are available to offer support and information any time of the day or night. There is never a good time to have to deal with HIV/AIDS but we are available whenever your situation calls for assistance. Patients and their families will always have support with our services.

### **Caregiver (respite) Support**

Caregivers for loved ones struggling with end-of-life terminal illness can often experience a great deal of fatigue and stress, among other challenges. Hospice care includes respite care for up to five days.

### **Grief Counseling**

We realize that the death of a patient is not the end of the suffering for the affected family. We offer grief support for a year after passing to assure the family is able to adequately cope with their loss.

*Choosing hospice care doesn't mean that you've given up hope. Instead, hospice care means you're changing what you hope for.*

