



# Take the Time Now to Understand Hospice

By Denise Stancill, Director of Business Development, Hospice of Holland, Inc.

A stark reality that hospices encounter every day is the challenge of convincing reluctant individuals to become open to hospice services. This hesitation is due largely to the stigma associated with the term “hospice” itself. Because Hospice care is end of life care, understandably the mere mention of the word can instill feelings of fear in many who hear it. Unfortunately, instead of engaging with a hospice care team who can help alleviate those feelings, fear makes the hospice discussion one most want to avoid.

Research shows that the majority of people who engage hospice services for a loved one wish they had done so sooner. Unless one has already undergone a hospice experience, it is common to lack adequate information about what to expect at end of life or have awareness that one needs to take time to consider their own end of life wishes and what they may involve. This lack of awareness can lead to making an already complex time even more complicated.

Part of a hospice provider’s role is to help change this stigma by reframing how a person views end of life. Hospices exist to help bring understanding to this delicate time in life and make hope, dignity, compassionate care, and quality of life, however that is defined for each individual, the outlook for each patient served.

Research has also shown us that there are collective concerns individuals have about end-of-life. This is how hospice addresses those concerns:

- “I don’t want to be in pain.” **Hospices are specialists at relieving physical and**

**emotional pain.**

- “I want honest answers from my physicians.” **Hospices are experts at having frank discussions about prognosis.**
- “I want to have time to get my personal affairs in order.” **Hospices assist with advance care planning.**
- “I need help coming to terms with my own mortality.” **Hospices bring emotional and spiritual support to the patient and family as they transition toward end of life.**

No one wants to face a terminal diagnosis either as a patient or with a loved one. However, it is a universal issue we all will face. The best time to learn about hospice is before it is required. View a new online resource, [www.understandhospice.org](http://www.understandhospice.org) and begin to understand the specialty of hospice care and get answers to important questions like these that often come up when it’s time:

**Can I receive hospice services at home?  
How soon should I call hospice?  
Is hospice the right choice?**

Be open to talking about your end of life wishes with loved ones and trusted advocates now. Don’t wait to make a call to hospice. Avoid being in the position of saying “I wish I would have called hospice sooner.”

*For more information about Hospice of Holland programs and services, to make a referral, or for answers to your questions about hospice care please call 616-396-2972. View [www.hollandhospice.org](http://www.hollandhospice.org) to learn and hear from others why care from Hospice of Holland made a difference for their loved one.*

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## “I should have called hospice sooner.”™

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[hollandhospice.org](http://hollandhospice.org)  
[understandhospice.org](http://understandhospice.org)

**Understand Hospice** is a service of Hospice of Holland, whose mission is to provide end-of-life care to patients facing terminal illness and their caregivers. *Contact us today at 616-396-2972 to learn how hospice can help.*