

QUESTION	ADVANCED ILLNESS CARE	HOSPICE
What is the focus of care?	Palliative care (or “advanced illness care”) works together with the primary treatment being received. It focuses on the pain, symptoms, and stress at any stage in an advanced illness and is not time-limited.	Hospice care focuses on the pain, symptoms, and stress of serious illness during the terminal phase (defined by Medicare as a life expectancy of six months or less).
Who can receive this type of care?	Any individual with a serious illness, regardless of life expectancy or prognosis.	Any individual with a serious illness measured in months, not years, and who has a terminal prognosis.
Can patients continue to receive curative treatments?	Individuals receiving advanced illness care are often still pursuing curative treatment modalities.	Hospice provides comfort through an interdisciplinary approach because curative treatments are no longer beneficial.
What services are provided?	Pain and symptom management, in-person and telephonic visits, help navigating treatment options, advance care planning, and referrals to community resources the will benefit quality of life.	Pain and symptom management, 24-hour on-call service, in-person visits, medical equipment, related medications, inpatient care, continuous care in the home, respite care, volunteer services, spiritual care, bereavement, and counseling services.
Who provides these services?	Most advanced illness services are provided by a physician or nurse practitioner, with consultative support from other members of the clinical team, as needed. These services are performed in collaboration with the primary care physician and specialists through consultative services or co-management of the patients’ disease process.	Hospice care is provided by an interdisciplinary team that is led by a physician and includes nurses, social workers, chaplains, volunteers, hospice aides, and others. These services are performed in collaboration with the attending physician.
How long can an individual receive services?	Advanced illness care is not time-limited. How long an individual receives care will depend on their care needs and the coverage they have through Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance. Most individuals receive this care on an intermittent basis that increases over time as their disease progresses.	As long as the individual patient meets Medicare, Medicaid, or their private insurer’s criteria for hospice care. This is usually measured in months, not years.
When should one refer a patient?	Patients with advanced chronic illness that have received maximum medical therapy and are at risk of using the hospital for decompensation.	If physician would not be surprised if this patient died within the next 12 months. Patients who have received maximum therapy and focus has shifted to symptom management and comfort care.
How does payment for these services work?	Advanced illness care is covered through Medicare Part B or through Medicaid. Most private insurers include this care as a covered service. Some treatments and medications may not be covered, and may be subject to a co-pay, according to the plan.	Most private insurers have a hospice benefit that pays all costs associated with care related to the terminal prognosis. There may be some medications, services, or equipment not included, and may be subject to a co-pay.