

The Transition Toolkit: A Guide to Compassionate Care

Answers to your most important questions about
palliative support and comfort care.



A self-guided resource for families.



Choosing Comfort is Not “Giving Up”

Shifting focus is not about giving up on life; it is about choosing how you want to live the time remaining. Research indicates that intensive support can actually help people live longer. By managing pain and reducing the stress of frequent emergency room visits, the body often remains stable for longer.

“Families frequently say their only regret was not starting support sooner.”



Understanding the Difference: Palliative Support vs. Hospice Care

While both focus on comfort, the goals and timing differ.

Palliative Care



Broad medical support for anyone with a serious illness. Can begin at diagnosis alongside curative treatments.
Goal: Improve quality of life at any stage.

Hospice Care



Specialized comfort care for the final phase of an illness. Begins when curative treatment stops.
Goal: Dignity and symptom relief when life expectancy is limited.

Knowing When to Ask for Help

Eligibility is based on medical prognosis, typically when a doctor certifies that the illness is in its advanced stages (final months).

Conditions Beyond Cancer

- 🌿 Advanced Heart Disease (CHF)
- 🌿 Dementia and Alzheimer's
- 🌿 Lung Disease (COPD)
- 🌿 Kidney or Liver Failure
- 🌿 Neurological diseases like Parkinson's or ALS

Signs of Decline

Frequent hospital visits, significant weight loss, or struggle with daily activities like dressing or bathing.

A Guideline, Not a Deadline

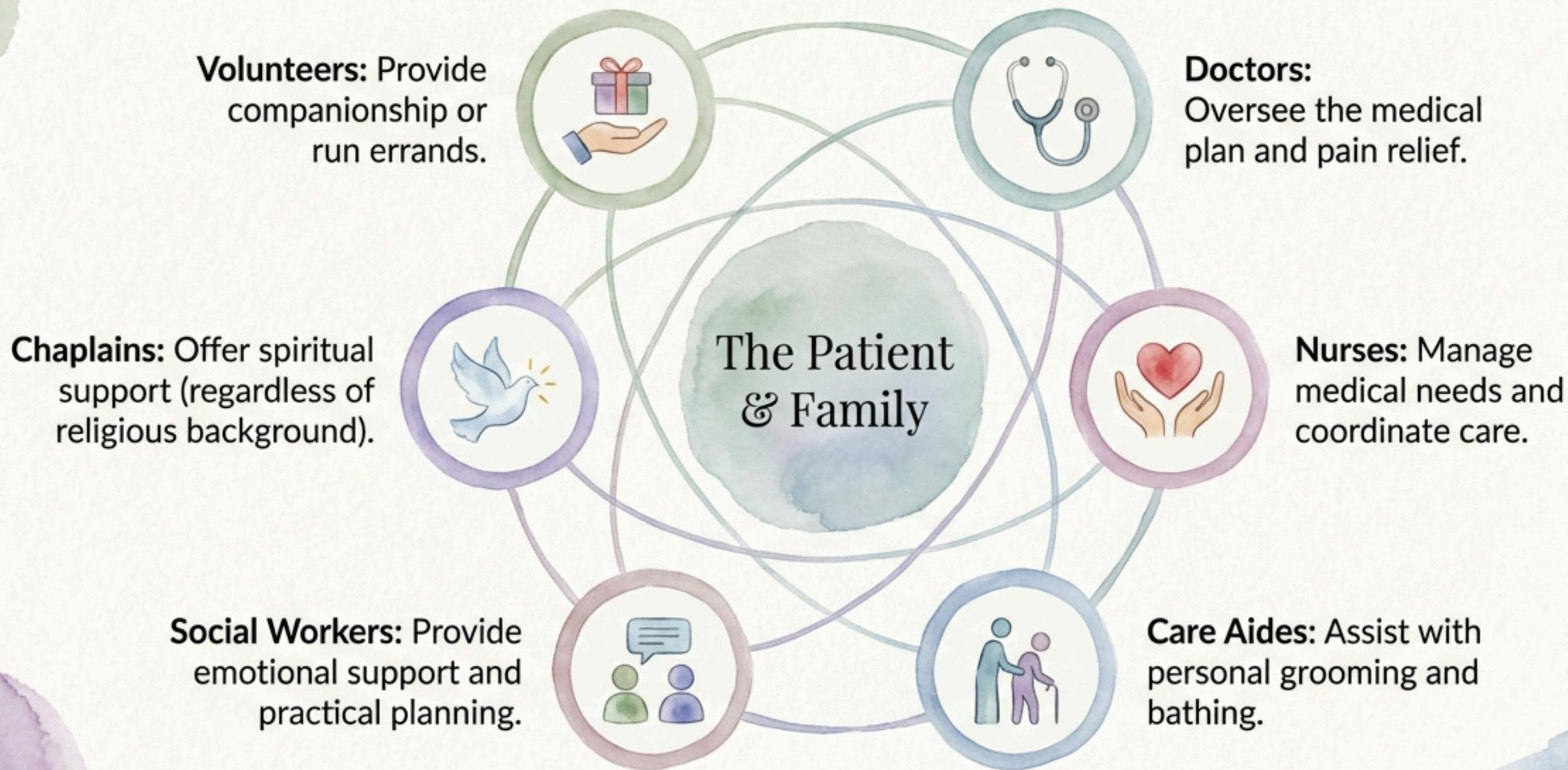
The 'six-month' estimation is an eligibility guideline, not a hard limit.

If a patient lives longer than expected, care continues as long as a doctor confirms the medical need exists.

Some patients improve due to the high quality of care. In these cases, they may “graduate” to standard care, with the option to re-enroll later if their condition changes.



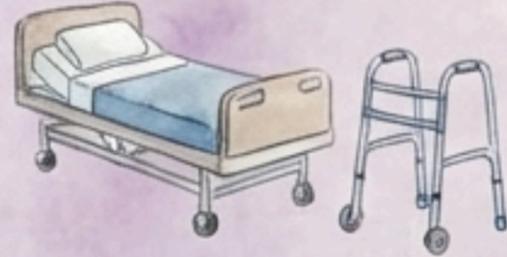
You Are Supported by a Full Team



More Than Just Visits: What is Included



The Care Team:
Regular scheduled visits from professionals.



Medical Equipment:
Delivery of hospital beds, oxygen, wheelchairs, and walkers.

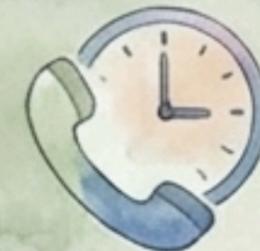


Supplies:
Bandages, catheters, and incontinence supplies.



Medications:
Drugs specifically for pain and symptom management.

Bonus: 24/7 Support – Access to a nurse by phone at any time, day or night.



Adapting Intensity to Your Needs



Routine Care: The standard support provided in your home.



Continuous Care: Nursing provided at the bedside during a medical crisis to avoid hospitalization.



Inpatient Care: Short-term stays in a facility for symptoms that cannot be managed at home.



Respite Care: A five-day stay in a facility specifically to give the family caregiver a break.

Care for the Caregiver

We treat the whole family, not just the patient.



Training: Nurses teach you how to manage medications and equipment so you feel confident.

Respite: Arrangements for the patient to stay in a facility (up to five days) to allow family rest.

Bereavement Support: After a loss, the team provides at least 13 months of grief counseling, support groups, and check-ins.

A Service, Not a Place

The vast majority of care is provided wherever the patient currently lives.



Private Homes

Assisted Living

Residential or Long-Term Care

If the patient is in a Residential Care facility, the specialized team works alongside the facility staff to provide an extra layer of comfort.

Financial Peace of Mind

Medical Care Coverage.

For most families, the cost of the medical team, medications, and equipment is covered 100% by **Provincial Health Plans** or **Public Health Benefits**.



Important Distinction: Room & Board.

While clinical visits, drugs, and supplies are covered, **rent is not**. If you live in a Residential Care facility or Assisted Living, you are typically still responsible for rent or facility fees.



Most private insurance plans also include robust palliative benefits.

What to Look for in a Provider

Whether choosing a non-profit community society or other provider, ensure they align with your values.



Communication

Keeping the family informed.



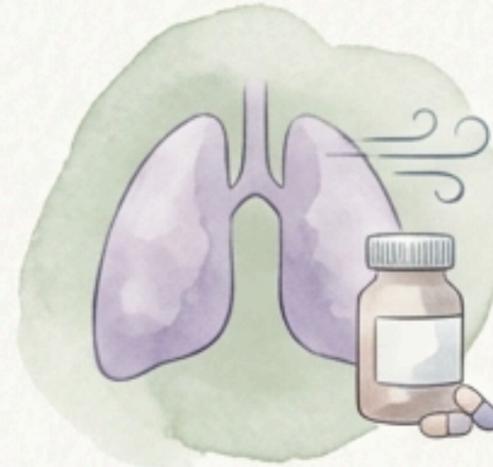
Timely Help

Fast response to after-hours or weekend calls.



Respectful Care

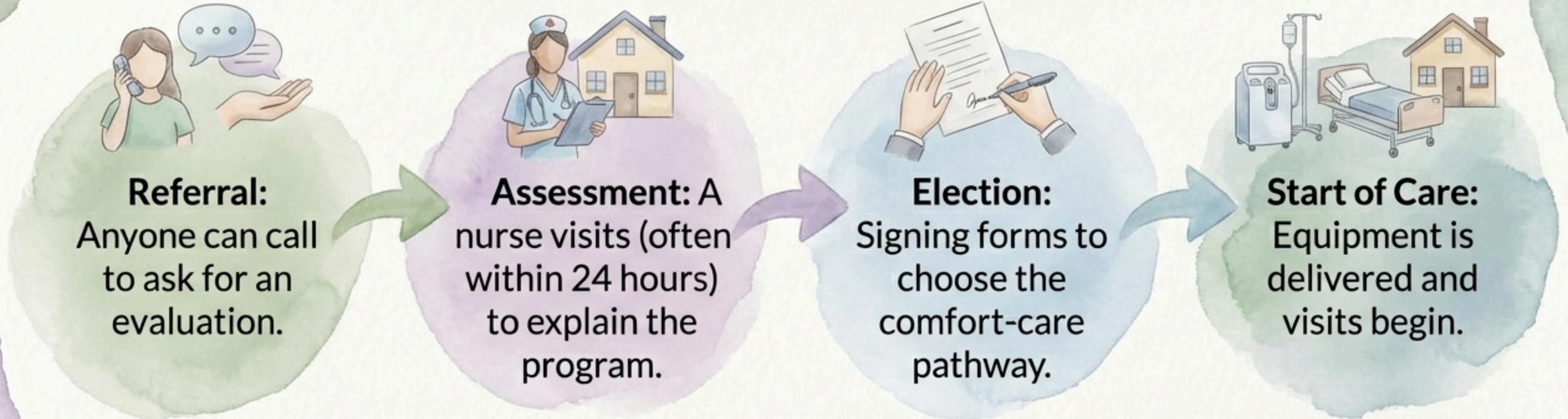
Treating the patient with dignity.



Symptom Help

Effectively managing pain and breathing.

How to Start the Conversation



Don't wait for a crisis. Early engagement leads to better quality of life.

A Journey of Dignity and Comfort

*“The goal is not to count the days,
but to make the days count.”*



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