

Interviewing a Hospice Agency: What Questions Should I Ask?

By the Pro-Life Healthcare Alliance

A hospice which respects the sanctity of life and truly abides by the founding principles of hospice -- maintain dignity, increase quality of life, and provide comfort and pain control -- can be trusted as a safe haven for patients in need of expert end-of-life care. In order to ensure full understanding, patients and families must do their homework by asking questions and getting a copy of the answers in writing (as any marketing or sales expert will tell the family what they want to hear).

Hospice programs are independent from one another and the services provided are not the same. It is essential that you *interview* a hospice *prior* to signing on for care and allowing them into your home. When seeking hospice care, keep in mind your values should come first and must never be compromised.

1. What is the "mission" or "business statement" of the hospice?
2. Is the hospice nonprofit or for profit?
3. Is the hospice pro-life? If yes, is this evidenced on the website, in brochures, mission, etc.?
4. Is the hospice licensed by the state?
5. Is the hospice Medicare-certified?
6. Has the hospice ever committed insurance fraud? *Google the name of the hospice and Medicare fraud.*
7. How many counties does the hospice serve? How far do on-call nurses have to travel to reach me if there is an emergency?
8. Can I meet or speak by phone with the hospice administrator *prior* to hospice admission?
9. Can I meet the staff who will be providing care *prior* to admission?
10. What types of services are provided? How often will each of these services be provided to me (or my loved one)? *Get these important details in writing.*
11. Will services be provided by the same individuals throughout the course of my care?
12. What kinds of support are available to my family/caregivers?
13. How are services provided after hours? How long may it take for an on-call nurse to respond to my call? How long may it take for an on-call nurse to get to my home?

14. What do hospice volunteers do? Am I eligible for volunteer services?
15. Can the hospice provide care in a nursing home or assisted living center?
16. Must someone be with me at all times?
17. Must I commit to a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) status?
18. Can I receive IV fluids and tube feedings?
19. What is the hospice's position regarding Terminal Sedation (also called Palliative Sedation)?
20. Will I receive a bill for expenses not covered by insurance?
21. What should I do first if I am having a problem with the care my hospice is providing?
22. What should I do if I feel the hospice hasn't addressed my concerns adequately?

This list of suggested questions comes from the [Pro-Life Healthcare Alliance](#).