

You, your patient and the family will benefit from hospice services. When a cure is no longer possible, or the burden of treatment for liver disease is outweighing quality of life, hospice services provide unique medical, emotional and spiritual support for the patient and their family. You play an important role in providing your patients choices for end-of-life care.

When are Patients with Liver Disease Appropriate for Hospice?

Any patient with end-stage liver disease may be appropriate for hospice care if the patient has a prognosis of six months or less should their disease run its natural course. It may be appropriate to initiate a hospice assessment if a patient has experienced one or any of the following:

- Progressive malnutrition, significant unintentional weight loss
- Continued active alcoholism (>80 gm ethanol/day)
- Recurrent variceal bleeding (despite intensive therapy)
- Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis
- Refractory to treatment, ascites or patient non-compliant
- Hepatitis B positive
- Hepatocellular carcinoma
- Documented clinical decline, including labs, over the past six months

- Palliative performance scale < 40%
- Requires assistance with three or more ADLs
- Frequent hospitalizations, office or ER visits
- Multiple co-morbidities

Note: The factors listed above are general medical guidelines and are not intended to be strict criteria. The decision to admit a patient to hospice is based on the clinical guidelines and each patient's unique needs.

Symptom Management

Hospice manages symptoms that affect a patient's quality of life, including but not limited to:

- Pain; profound weakness; dyspnea; nausea/vomiting
- Emotional distress such as anxiety or grief
- Spiritual or ethical issues that are related to the dying process
- Multi-system deterioration

Benefits

of Referring Your Patient to Hospice Care

Providing medications reduces the financial burden on the patient and family, thereby increasing patient and family satisfaction with your care

Intensive pain and symptom management which eliminates or reduces unnecessary hospitalizations/ ER visits

Medications, DME and supplies provided, making the patient more compliant to their treatment plan

Family support and education relieves caregiver stress and exhaustion which decreases demands on your time

Ability to benefit from a full range of programs and services, including 24-hour access to care, psychosocial programs, volunteer services and grief counseling

