

# **Myths & Realities**



*Last year, the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH made more than 151,000 home visits, serving nearly 6000 patients and families in 86 communities. Yet myths about home care and hospice linger, keeping many who need this care from making a call for help. Here are some commonly held misperceptions about the VNA & Hospice:*

**Myth:** Hospice and home care is only for people who are over 65.

**Fact:** Home care and hospice serve patients who are of all ages and at all stages of life.

**Myth:** Home health care is only for chronic or long term conditions.

**Fact:** With a goal of promoting optimal independence, services are available for short-term medical or physical needs. We receive a physician's order for your care, and then a VNA & Hospice nurse, physical or occupational therapist, social worker or other professional caregiver will coordinate the services you receive.

**Myth:** My mother goes to church and to doctors' appointments, so she isn't home bound. I guess she doesn't qualify for VNA services.

**Fact:** A patient may leave home and still be considered homebound, to meet the requirement for home care. If leaving the house requires a "considerable and taxing effort," if absences are infrequent and of short duration, and if a trip contributes to the patient's state of well-being (medical appointments, a special birthday party, a hair appointment, church, or to attend an accredited adult daycare program) then he or she can still be considered homebound.

**The cost of hospice and home care is covered by, Medicare, Veterans Administration benefits, Medicaid programs, and many health and long term care insurance companies.**

# VNA & Hospice *Myths and Realities*

**Myth:** Only a physician can make a referral to the VNA & Hospice.

**Fact:** Although a doctor must approve and order hospice and home care, anyone (including the patient) may call the VNA & Hospice to ask about the appropriateness of our services. Staff members will follow up immediately with the patient, primary care physician, or family. Call our referral information line at 800-575-5162.

**Myth:** In order to use VNA & Hospice services, you must change to a VNA & Hospice physician.

**Fact:** Your physician stays involved with your care, working with the VNA & Medical Directors and our nurses, for your entire plan of care.

**Myth:** Hospice is for people with cancer. And you should wait until the last minute to ask for hospice help.

**Fact:** Anyone with a life-limiting illness can receive hospice care. Heart disease, kidney disease, COPD, and dementia are a few of the illnesses that can benefit from hospice services. The sooner a patient comes on hospice service, the more services are available for the patient and family.

**Myth:** You cannot be in a nursing home or facility and receive hospice services.

**Fact:** Our hospice team will visit and care for the patient wherever the patient lives. This can be at home, in an assisted living facility or nursing home.

**Myth:** It is difficult to get a patient on VNA & Hospice care.

**Fact:** It takes only one phone call to our referral line (800-575-5162.) VNA & Hospice will take care of everything else.



**One in ten hospice patients are referred too late to fully benefit from the wide array of supportive services that are available from hospice.**



Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice  
of Vermont and New Hampshire

*At Home with Care* • [www.vnavnh.org](http://www.vnavnh.org)