

HOSPICE and YOU



With increased scrutiny from survey agencies on the collaboration between a facility's resident care plan with a Hospice care plan, it is more important than ever that your contractual agreement and expectations of the Hospice agency are clearly defined.

Given the fragile and often complex nature of Hospice residents, it is imperative that parameters related to care, opportunities to resolve differences in opinion about the resident's needs and ensuring that the resident's chart does not contain conflicting information are negotiated variables prior to Hospice utilization in your building. Waiting until there is a significant event can be extremely costly to your facility, your resident's well being and your relationship with the Hospice provider.

You should not assume that the Hospice provider understands the scrutiny you will be under in a state survey, especially with respect to falls, pressure ulcers and weight loss. There is a level of education, that if provided by you to your Hospice provider, will likely strengthen your relationship with the provider as well as potentially protect your from increased survey pressure.

Consider the following strategies to avoid conflict, provide collaborative resident care and meet your regulatory obligations:

1. Define with the provider your facility's focus on fall prevention, pressure ulcer prevention and weight loss identification and intervention and any other pertinent issues that are a focus of care for your facility staff.
2. Take time to explain your expectations about care plans, documentation in the chart and how it should parallel with the resident's established MDS and care plan.
3. Discuss how you will resolve any differences between your staff and Hospice personnel regarding care interventions.
4. Request that the Hospice Medical Director and your Medical Director meet quarterly to review utilization and to maintain a relationship in the event you would need to resolve any care conflict.
5. Request a quarterly review from the provider of their documentation. Give specific examples of the written expression you expect to read in the chart to support the resident's overall plan of care.
6. Determine specific documentation and investigative techniques that will be utilized to perform a QA audit relative to a fall, injury or other quality related matter experienced by a Hospice resident while residing in your facility.
7. Request that a Hospice representative attend your scheduled quality meetings to facilitate relationships between staff, resolve any immediate issues and to ensure problem-solving with your staff about opportunities to improve overall care.

Partnering with your Hospice provider will assist you in gaining trust, maintaining quality throughout your facility, and eliminating potential costly citations. Communication and collaboration will create the appropriate environment for your residents to receive seamless and comprehensive care throughout their length of stay in your facility.