

An Early Decision Is A Smart Decision

It's never too early to call. Don't wait to call Hospice of North Idaho.

By Amanda Miller

What if there was an organization that you could call when your loved one became seriously ill and there was the possibility they might not recover?



What if this organization sent trained experts to see your loved one, like nurses to help with pain and symptom management, an aide to help with daily care like bathing, and a social worker to help you and your family navigate some of the emotional difficulties you were grappling with? What if this organization were available 24 hours a day to answer your questions? What if they would send a spiritual chaplain when you needed one? And trained volunteer companions who could sit with your loved one while you took a break or went to the grocery store?

What if the organization would help by delivering medical equipment, like beds, wheelchairs, or a walker? What if they also took care of managing all of your loved one's medications? And, what if they would come to your loved one in whatever setting they call home - even if it is an assisted living or skilled nursing facility? What if they had a beautiful, home-like building where your loved one could go and receive around the clock care while you took a break for a few days?

And, what if this organization would provide all this and more at no cost to you, regardless of your insurance or income?

Of course you would pick up the phone and

call, because who wouldn't want all of these things for their loved one; expertise and compassion served up in an affordable package?

Well, you are in luck, because this organization exists. It's called Hospice of North Idaho. After reading all that, the question is not why should you call, but when should you call?

Nationally, the number of people enrolling in hospice services continues to increase, but a different issue is looming: people aren't enrolling in hospice soon enough to receive the full benefits for themselves and their loved ones. While hospice services are available for people with a six month or less prognosis, the national median length of stay on hospice care is just 20 days, with a third of all patients being on hospice for less than a week before they die.

Unlike other types of healthcare, hospice care has an extremely high satisfaction rate, with over 98% of family members saying they would recommend hospice to others. However, time and time again, many family surveys at Hospice of North Idaho echo some version of this sentiment: "I wish we would have called Hospice of North Idaho sooner".

So why do people wait so long to call us, especially in light of what is an incredibly emotionally, physically, and spiritually challenging time?

One reason may be the myths and misconceptions about hospice that seem to circulate. A few fairly common ones are that hospice is only for people who are over 65, or those with cancer. Both of these are false, as Hospice of North Idaho serves many younger patients, and is also equipped to care for babies and children. In 2013, less than 40% of all patients served by Hospice of North Idaho had a cancer

continued on pg. 12