



Alzheimer's/Lewy Body Dementia/ Cerebral Atherosclerosis

If you have a patient with Alzheimer's Disease, Lewy Body Dementia, or Cerebral Atherosclerosis they may be eligible for hospice.

Only one in three people in the United States eligible for hospice care receive it – even though hospice is covered by Medicare and most Medicaid and commercial insurance plans for eligible patients. This even includes coverage for medications, equipment and supplies related to comfort care for the life-limiting illness.

Why aren't more people taking advantage of the benefit? Largely because people don't understand all that hospice can offer – or because they are not aware of the many diagnoses that can qualify a patient for hospice. If you have a patient with Alzheimer's, Lewy Body Dementia, or Cerebral Atherosclerosis that meets the following criteria, they may be eligible for hospice services:

THE PATIENT HAS BOTH 1 and 2

1. Stage 7C or beyond according to the Functional Assessment Staging Scale* with all of the following:
 - Inability to ambulate without personal assistance (e.g., requires assistance from another person to ambulate)
 - Inability to dress or bathe without assistance
 - Urinary and fecal incontinence, intermittent or constant
 - Speech ability is limited to the use of approximately 6 intelligible words in an average day or in the course of an intensive interview (the person may repeat the word over and over)

AND

2. Has had at least one (1) of the following conditions within the past twelve (12) months:
 - Aspiration pneumonia
 - Pyelonephritis or other upper urinary tract infection
 - Septicemia
 - Decubitus ulcers, multiple, stage 3-4
 - Fever, recurrent after antibiotics
 - Other significant event or condition that suggests a limited prognosis
 - Inability to maintain sufficient fluid and calorie intake demonstrated by either of the following:
 - 10% weight loss during the previous six (6) months

OR

- Serum albumin < 2.5 gm/dl

In the absence of one or more of these findings, rapid decline or co-morbidities may also support eligibility for hospice care. Patients are eligible for hospice care if in the physician's clinical judgment they have a life expectancy of six months or less if the disease runs its normal course. These determinants are to be used as guidelines and do not take the place of a physician's clinical judgment.

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