



## If you have a patient who had a Stroke or is in a Coma, they may be eligible for hospice care.

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 who had a Stroke or is in a Coma that meets the following criteria, they may be eligible for hospice services:

### THE PATIENT HAS BOTH 1 and 2

1. Poor functional status with Palliative Performance Scale\* of equal to or less than 40% (mainly in bed and requires significant assistance with ADLs)

*\*A patient with a 40% score on the Palliative Performance Scale spends most of their day in bed or in a chair. Their energy is low and they require assistance with their ADLs. Their food intake is normal or reduced. Their level of consciousness may vary from full to drowsy to confusion.*

### AND

2. Poor nutritional status with inability to maintain sufficient fluid and calorie intake with at least one of the following:
  - 10% or greater weight loss over the previous six (6) months
  - 7.5% or greater weight loss over the previous three (3) months
  - Serum albumin <2.5 gm/dl
  - Current history of pulmonary aspiration without effective response to speech language pathology interventions to improve dysphagia and decrease aspiration events

### Supporting documentation includes:

Coma (any etiology) with three (3) of the following on the third (3rd) day of coma:

- Abnormal brain stem response
- Absent verbal responses
- Absent withdrawal response to pain

*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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