

Choosing a *Quality* Hospice



NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Hospice and
Grief Center

The region's most experienced provider



Beginning the hospice journey

It is your right to choose which hospice will serve you or your loved one.

Prior to entrusting your or your loved one's end of life care to a particular hospice, you may wish to research your options.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), a nonprofit organization committed to improving end of life care and expanding access to hospice care, has outlined a list of questions to ask the hospices you interview.

*To help you with your research, **Northern Illinois Hospice (NIH)** has included these recommended NHPCO questions as well as our agency's responses to those questions.*

Help at the time of need

If you would like to discuss hospice care, contact Northern Illinois Hospice at 815.398.0500 or at www.northernillinoishospice.org.



Northern Illinois Hospice nurse Sue Fricke, RN sits with patient Martha Cieslak.
Photo reprinted with permission. Photo credit: Michael Cieslak

The hospice organization

? Does the hospice have a long history of providing care to the community?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** has served terminally ill individuals and their families for 35 years. As the first hospice in northern Illinois and one of the first 50 in the U.S., we have supported thousands of patients and their families and are now serving third generations.

? Is the hospice Medicare certified?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** is certified by Medicare and is a provider of services through the State of Illinois Medicaid program. We follow the rules and regulations of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

? Does the hospice have an effective business structure?

Yes, we do. Established by and for the communities we serve, **Northern Illinois Hospice** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is governed by a volunteer board of directors. As a nonprofit, all annual revenues are directed back to the organization to further our mission. All donations enhance patient and family care and help support underinsured and uninsured patients.

? Is the hospice a National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) member and does it use all aspects of NHPCO's Standards for Hospice Programs?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** is a member of NHPCO and uses the NHPCO Self Assessments Standards to assess quality and improve care.

? Is the hospice licensed and/or accredited?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** is licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health and bases its quality program on the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's Standards for Hospice Care. Hospices are not required to be accredited.

Hospice staff & experience

- ?** Are clinical staff (physicians, nurses, and social workers) certified or credentialed in hospice and palliative care?

*Yes, several members of the **Northern Illinois Hospice** clinical team have earned certifications in hospice and palliative care.*

- ?** Does the hospice have adequate staffing to care for all patients?

*Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** ensures sufficient staff to meet the needs of each patient. A number of clinicians also work for us on an “as-needed” basis when patient demands require additional support.*

Responsiveness to needs

- ?** Will the hospice admit my loved one or me at any time, including nights and weekends?

*Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** is available to begin the admissions process immediately, including evening and weekend hours.*

- ?** Will hospice staff respond to a crisis any time of the day or night and on weekends?

*Yes, absolutely. We respond to every call. **Northern Illinois Hospice** nurses are available to make visits to assist our patients and families 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. We are proud of our quick response to patient and family needs.*

“Hospice was fantastic. Everything was explained to us so we could understand what was going on and what we were to expect during the process. You have a wonderful staff.”

— Excerpt from NIH family evaluation survey



“I’m not telling what I heard; I’m telling what I know. My experience [with Northern Illinois Hospice] was wonderful.”

— LaDeta Layne, caregiver and granddaughter of former NIH patient Vera Morehead

Hospice in facilities

? Does the hospice work with nursing or assisted living facilities?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** provides services in many nursing and assisted living facilities, and we work diligently to provide the comforts of home to all patients, wherever they reside.

Volunteer support

? Does the hospice have volunteers?

Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** has the region’s largest base of hospice volunteers. Patient care volunteers provide a variety of services, including friendly visits, light household chores, and errands. Volunteers are assigned quickly and great care is taken to match volunteers to patient and family needs.

DID YOU KNOW?

62%

of U.S. hospice patients had non-cancer diagnoses

71.8

average length of service (in days) experienced by U.S. hospice patients

66%

of U.S. hospice patients reside in their home

84%

of U.S. hospice patients served by Medicare benefits

*Information provided by the 2013 edition of *NHPCO Facts and Figures: Hospice Care in America*.

99%

of patient families said NIH treated their loved one with respect

100

area physicians work with NIH

94%

of patient families would recommend NIH to others

*Information provided by Northern Illinois Hospice.



? Are patient care volunteers screened and trained?

*Yes, patient care volunteers for **Northern Illinois Hospice** are carefully screened, thoroughly trained, and individually matched to patient and family needs. Prior to serving patients and families, all patient care volunteers undergo a criminal background check and receive in-depth training in hospice care.*

Additional services provided

? Does the hospice offer “extra” services?

*Yes, we do. Complementary therapies are offered to patients who might benefit from alternative approaches to pain and symptom relief. These therapies include massage for physical comfort as well as pet visitors who relax and calm patients, helping them both emotionally and physically. Throughout the year, **Northern Illinois Hospice** also does special things to bring joy to our patients. Additionally, families benefit from our enhanced bereavement program and grief support groups after their loved one is gone.*

? Does the hospice provide any special support for veterans?

*Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** participates in the We Honor Veterans program and is committed to providing the specialized care to meet the unique end of life needs of veterans. In 2013, 13% of patients served were veterans.*

Quality assessment

? Has the hospice been surveyed by a state or federal oversight agency in the last five years?

*Yes, all hospices are inspected on a schedule determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). **Northern Illinois Hospice** works very hard to deliver quality hospice care and follow federal and state regulations. IDPH awarded NIH a perfect score (zero deficiencies) during the 2013 inspection.*

? Does the hospice conduct a family satisfaction survey?

*Yes, **Northern Illinois Hospice** uses the Family Evaluation of Hospice Care and Family Evaluation of Bereavement Care surveys and compares results to national and state surveys. We diligently monitor our performance to ensure a positive family experience, quality care, and compassionate service.*



About Northern Illinois Hospice

Founded in 1979, Northern Illinois Hospice (a 501(c)(3) organization) provides superior, compassionate end-of-life care for individuals and bereavement support for families and friends. All donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Volunteer Howard Ballard hands patient Melvin "Bud" Hines a handmade lap robe to honor his service to our country. Hines was a staff sergeant in the Army during World War II.



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Live every moment

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