

# How to Choose a Hospice Provider



When researching which hospice would be the best fit for you or a loved one, there are a number of important factors to consider. According to BAYADA Hospice medical director Dr. John Saroyan, “It helps when patients and their families explore their hospice options before services are actually needed, if at all possible. That way, there is one less decision to make at the time when hospice is needed.”

Below are some important questions Dr. Saroyan suggests to ask when selecting a hospice, and why they are important:

 **Does the hospice have availability for admissions and informational visits during nights and weekends?**

For some people, the decision to explore hospice care and call for a consultation may happen suddenly, outside of normal weekday business hours. If your family reaches that important juncture after hours, it’s critical that you can count on having a nurse come out to do an evaluation as soon as possible.

 **What can you expect from night and weekend staff?**

After enrolling in hospice, some of the most uncertain and scariest moments can occur after hours. In some cases, it’s the darkness and feelings of being alone that can make a change in physical condition feel more frightening. That’s why you need to know that you can count on the support of a member of your hospice team any time, day or night.

 **Does it have the resources to meet your needs?**

An organization that has a decades-long history of caring for the community has had the opportunity to develop best practices and the resources to most successfully address your needs. If applicable, you should consider a hospice that has specific expertise in caring for people with unique needs, such as military veterans or people with end-stage Alzheimer’s disease.



 **Is the hospice medical director available for phone calls or home visits?**

Medicare requires that hospices employ a medical director to oversee all of the care provided. The level of involvement of the doctor, however, depends on their availability and the way each hospice is structured. Some hospices' medical directors are primarily available by phone, while others have a full-time doctor who is available to not only consult with the other members of your hospice team, but also to make home visits when appropriate.

 **What are the organization's values?**

The organization's message and promise should be matched by its employees' actions. By researching a hospice's reputation, you can learn if they have a combination of compassion and clinical excellence that is essential in end-of-life care. Noticing how the staff treats you from the first phone interaction to the first home visit will give you great insight as to whether they "practice what they preach."

 **What types of accreditation does the hospice have?**

A hospice that has voluntarily submitted to undergo accreditation from an independent body such as CHAP (Community Health Accreditation Partner) shows it is committed to upholding and exceeding high industry standards. Membership in National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) also shows the commitment of a hospice to upholding high levels of care for patients and their families.

 **What are the hospice's hiring practices?**

Even though you may need the help of hospice professionals, you may be hesitant to invite strangers into one of the most private spaces of your life – your home. That is why having confidence that the organization stands behind the quality of its employees is so important. Look for a hospice that requires all its employees to have certain levels of professional training/certifications before hiring, performs background and reference checks, and fully insures them.

 **Does the hospice provide services in your town?**

It's important to know the hospice's coverage area. You will want to know how long it may take for a member of the hospice team to arrive at your home should an urgent need or crisis arise.

These suggestions are not an exhaustive list of criteria for a quality hospice; they are meant to be a guide with useful questions to aid in researching hospice options. You may have other requirements or need services that have particular importance to you and your family. For more information on BAYADA Hospice, visit [bayada.com/hospice](http://bayada.com/hospice).



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