

## Refer to Hospice Earlier for Longer Lengths-of-Stay

A stressed healthcare system is making late referrals to hospice even more challenging for everyone involved.

- 25% of patients receive hospice care for  $\leq 5$  days <sup>2</sup>
- 50% receive care for  $\leq 18$  days <sup>2</sup>

**Short stays—possibly caused by late referrals—don't allow patients enough time to receive the full benefits of care.<sup>2</sup>**

- Increased comfort and peace-of-mind
- Focus on living their final months more fully

**You can play a key role in helping your patients.**

- Look for natural signs and symptoms of decline
- Refer to hospice earlier

**"Because many put off enrolling... even short waits can mean the loss of valuable care."<sup>1</sup>**

**If you are seeing signs of decline, initiate a referral to hospice.**

**FAX  
919.828.9514**

**CALL  
919.828.0890**

## Signs of Decline

- Withdrawal from people, activities, and communicating less
- Eating and drinking less with gradual weight loss
- Sleeping more
- Increased hospitalizations
- Disorientation and confusion
- Physical changes:
  - Increased/decreased pulse
  - Decreased blood pressure
  - Changes in skin color
  - Irregularities in breathing
  - Changes in body temperature

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/16/health/coronavirus-hospice-staff.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nhpco.org/nhpcos-new-facts-and-figures-report-shows-changes-in-hospice-patient-diagnoses/>

