



Volunteer Services

Care Initiatives Hospice Volunteer Program is designed to provide volunteer services to hospice patients, families, and caregivers. Historically, volunteers ran hospice programs. There was not a comprehensive program to pay for hospice care until 1982, when Congress provided a provision in the Medicare Benefit to reimburse providers for hospice care. A significant part of this provision was the requirement that hospice programs certified under Medicare have a volunteer program.

To ensure that Medicare certified hospice programs are utilizing volunteers in direct care positions, programs must report the hours volunteers work. A minimum of 5% of the direct care staff hours must be provided by volunteers. Medicare certified programs are also required to show the cost savings of the volunteer hours to the program.

Care Initiatives Hospice Volunteers can provide:

- Emotional support for the patient, family and caregivers
- Respite to allow the caregiver a rest or a break from cares
- Assistance with office administrative duties
- Bereavement support and education

Care Initiatives Hospice volunteer applicants are carefully screened and required to complete an application, interview process, reference checks, and criminal backgrounds checks. Volunteers are required to complete orientation prior to their assignment.

Many hospice volunteers come to this work with personal experience of a family member or friend having received hospice care and they are committed to providing the support that they know caregivers need during this time. Care Initiatives Hospice volunteers are an important member of the interdisciplinary care team and provide valuable insight into the patient care services provided.