

Hospice of Santa Barbara -- Frequently Asked Questions

January 2012

1. What does “hospice” mean?

Hospice comes from the Latin root for “hospitality” and “hospitable”. The words “hospital”, “hotel” and “hostel” all derive from the same Latin root, and suggest places of comfort, support, and care. Since the 1970s, the term has been adopted to describe emotional, social, physical and spiritual care for the terminally ill and for those who care about them.

2. What is Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc.?

Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. is the second oldest hospice in America. We are a local non-profit human services agency which provides free counseling, care management¹, support groups, respite care, complementary therapies (such as massage, Reiki, and healing touch), and volunteer services to people impacted by life-threatening illness or grieving the death of a loved one. We began as a small group of visionary volunteers, and we now have a professional staff of 30 and over 100 volunteers.

3. Hospice of Santa Barbara is a “Volunteer Hospice.” What is a “Volunteer Hospice?”

There are two basic types of hospice organizations in the U.S. The vast majority – more than 99% -- are “medical model” hospices, which offer nursing care and supportive services. To qualify for these services, a person needs to have a medical diagnosis of less than six months to live and agree to forgo treatments (such as chemotherapy) that are intended to cure their condition or prolong their life. These hospices draw income from Medicare, Medical and insurance policies.

Hospice of Santa Barbara is one of the few “volunteer hospices” in the country. We do not provide nursing services, but instead focus on the emotional, personal and spiritual aspects of dying and grieving, and we *volunteer* these services to the community free of charge. Since we are free from government or insurance funding, we have much more freedom and discretion in serving people facing death or grieving. For example, we can serve people who may have a diagnosis of more than 6 months to live or who are ‘actively’ being treated for a life-threatening illness. Our counselors and social workers, while highly skilled and professionally licensed, can spend much more time with individuals. The state Attorney General monitors operations.

4. Aren’t there two hospices in Santa Barbara? What is the difference?

In Santa Barbara there are two major hospice organizations: Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. which is a volunteer hospice, and Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care (VNHC) which is a medical model hospice.

¹ *Case management is a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the options and services required to meet the client's health and human service needs. It is characterized by advocacy, communication, and resource management and promotes quality and cost-effective interventions and outcomes.*

The medical model (VNHC) can provide care when a prognosis of 6 months to live is given to a patient. Medical hospices focus on relieving physical pain associated with end of life. Medical hospices are paid for through Medicare, Medicaid and private insurances. This vital and important service does create limitations: 1) If you are receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatments in the hope of being cured, you are not eligible; 2) detailed federal guidelines must be followed to support the services.

5. What specific services does Hospice of Santa Barbara provide?

- We help individuals and families cope with grief related to the loss of a loved one
- We care for anyone facing a life-threatening illness
- We offer up to 15 different kinds of support groups: “Widows and Widowers” (separate groups for both younger and older adults), “Survivors of Suicide,” “Parenting After Loss,” people who have lost young children, people who have lost adult children, etc.
- Care management (having a professional social worker coordinate services)
- Respite care by trained volunteers
- Volunteer services of many kinds: cooking, driving, gardening, etc.
- Complementary Therapies that use various forms of massage and energy work to help alleviate stress and fatigue.
- Community education: We often are called into schools or businesses where a death has occurred to help people know how to cope and heal. We also speak around town on topics of
- Advance care planning: our experienced medical social workers can meet with individuals, families and groups to help complete forms that make sure that each person’s wishes are known at the end of life. This includes not only authority for medical decisions, but also information about how you want to be cared for, how you want to be remembered, and what you want people to know about what your life has meant to you.
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6. How do people find out about Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc.?

Referrals from many community partnerships, physicians, friends or family members, through the local media, community events like Light Up A Life, or the Internet (www.hospiceofsb.org).

7. What happens when I call Hospice of Santa Barbara?

Call our office at 805-563-8820 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. When you call during business hours our receptionist will answer the telephone. If you are calling and are in need of our services, our receptionist will transfer your call to a professional counselor. The counselor will listen to your needs and will offer the appropriate Hospice of Santa

Barbara services. Hospice of Santa Barbara is partnered with other local social service agencies and can make referrals when necessary.

8. Do you provide services to Spanish speaking clients?

Yes, we have six members of our staff who are bilingual. With this team, we can help people of any age deal with a life-threatening illness or the loss of a family member.

9. Do you provide services to children and teens?

Yes, this is one of our specialties, and we are currently serving 140 children every month. We offer services to children and teens in several ways:

- Individual and group counseling with counselors who specialize in helping children.
- A mentor program for children and teens, I Have a Friend®. I Have A Friend® matches children who have recently lost a parent or sibling with an adult who experienced a similar loss in their childhood.
- We lead weekly bereavement groups in all the local high schools – high school counselors make a referral for a student who can participate in our groups to deal with the death of friends or family members.
- Children as early as 2 years old can benefit from Hospice of Santa Barbara’s support.

10. I have heard that you are involved in palliative care in our community. What is palliative care?

The Palliative Care Consultation Service is a collaborative effort between Cottage Hospital, Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care, and our staff. Working together with each other and your physician, we provide an extra layer of pain and symptom management, as well as emotional and spiritual support to patients at the hospital and their families.

Bereavement care is offered to the surviving family members. We also are part of a clinical team for outpatient care through the Cancer Center. Both of these services are free.

11. How many people does Hospice of Santa Barbara serve?

We are currently serving 500 people every month, including 140 children.

12. How long can someone receive your services?

There is no limit on our services. People who are facing a life-threatening illness can be supported by us as long as needed. Some people may get the support they need in one or two visits. Others who have suffered particularly difficult losses can be helped by us for several months or even years. And we offer a “lifetime warranty” – someone we have served can always come back when they need us. Through all of this, there is never a charge for our services, and people do not need insurance.

13. Hospice of Santa Barbara clearly has a remarkable history. What is your vision for the future?

Regardless of medical or technological advances or new social programs, human beings will continue to face mortality and experience grief. When that occurs without support and understanding, it leads to broken and diminished lives. When mortality is faced instead with skilled, compassionate, care and support, it can lead to healed lives, deep wisdom and hope. At Hospice of Santa Barbara, we will continue to provide such care and services for decades to come.

14. What is your annual operations budget?

In 2012 it is \$2.66 million.

15. How is Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. able to support itself?

As a non-profit, Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. depends on the generosity of past, present, and future donors. Past donors have helped create our endowment, which is managed by an independent board of trustees. Current donors, local companies, and various foundations also support us. Because we value being free from insurance or government restrictions, we do not accept any funds that would compromise our ability to serve any one in need free of charge.

16. How can I help?

You can spread the word to people who could benefit from our services but may not know we exist and that our services are free. If someone is being impacted by a life-threatening illness – even if they are still determined to try for a cure – they can call us for support. If someone is burdened by the death of a loved one who died recently or even years ago, encourage them also to call us. We deal with a wide range of loss, and no loss – even the most tragic or complicated – is beyond our ability to help.

You can volunteer to help us, either by training to become a patient care volunteer or a volunteer to help us with administrative work and fundraising events.

You can make a donation so people in our community can continue receiving our services – donate on our website (www.hospiceofsb.org) or send a donation to Hospice of Santa Barbara, 2050 Alameda Padre Serra, Suite 100, Santa Barbara, CA, 93103.

You can also remember Hospice of Santa Barbara in your will and estate plan, which means you would be helping children, teenagers, families and adults deal with death and grief for generations to come. To do this you can speak to your own accountant, attorney, or financial advisor, or contact either our Director of Development or Executive Director. We have a list of local experts who would be glad to have a confidential conversation with you on how best to support our work. If you choose to support us in this way, be sure our full name – Hospice of Santa Barbara – is used along with our address to insure your gift goes to us.

17. Where are you offices located?

Our offices are within the Riviera Business Park, and we are just behind the Riviera Theater. We have exceptional offices that were designed specifically for the work we do. The design work and the building itself are expressions of gratitude from former clients. We encourage you to call and arrange for a tour.

18. How can I find out more?

We exist to serve you. If you have any questions or ideas, call 805-563-8820 or email us at info@hospiceofsb.org.