

Care with heart



Compassionate, high-quality cardiac care you can trust, certified by the American Heart Association (AHA).

The Palliative/Hospice Heart Failure certification serves as recognition that VITAS Healthcare's comprehensive cardiac care model for patients with advanced cardiac disease is aligned with the AHA's rigorous standards from admissions through bereavement.

If you have advanced cardiac disease and answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may be eligible for hospice services.

- Do you have chest pain or become short of breath with minimal physical activity or while at rest?
- Do you experience frequent congestion due to fluid in the lungs or having heart palpitations?
- Do you spend most of your day in a bed or chair?
- Do you get easily fatigued?
- Do you require more assistance with personal care activities?

In the last 6 months, have you:

- Visited the emergency room or been hospitalized for symptoms of cardiac disease?
- Lost weight unintentionally?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be eligible to receive hospice services. VITAS offers the next level of care for hospiceeligible patients with advanced cardiac disease in their preferred care setting. Patients with advanced cardiac disease can be confident they will receive high-quality, disease-directed hospice care when they choose VITAS. Talk with your doctor to find out if you qualify and to learn more about the Medicare Hospice Benefit.

Medicare Part A covers up to 100% of hospice-related medicines, home medical equipment, supplies, and access to a VITAS clinical team specially trained in cardiac care, who will visit you regularly at home, in a nursing home, or in a senior living community. Our goal is always to keep you out of the hospital and comfortable, with a coordinated focus on improving your quality of life.



Choose VITAS for Comfort Care

If you're eligible for the Medicare Hospice Benefit, Medicare Part A covers up to 100% of hospice care in your preferred care setting.

Patient

AM is an 86-year-old female with advanced heart disease. Over the last 6 months, she has had increased visits to the doctor as her symptoms intensified. She currently is in the hospital after falling while trying to walk from her recliner to her bed.

Health history

AM is comfortable at rest, but minimal activity causes her to become tired and makes her short of breath (SOB). She also has high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat, COPD and mild dementia.

Current symptoms

AM is experiencing severe SOB, exhaustion, heart palpitations and increased anxiety, even while at rest. She has lost 5% of her body weight in the last month and has widespread muscle wasting due to her lack of physical activity.

Is AM eligible for the Medicare hospice benefit?

Yes. She has advanced heart disease, worsening symptoms and is not responding to a change in medication. AM is unable to handle any physical activity without discomfort. She spends most of her day in a bed/chair and is increasingly unable to take care of herself.

AM wants to stay home and avoid more trips to the hospital

Before being discharged, the hospital nurse talks with AM's daughter about her mother's goals, wishes, and preferences. AM wants to return home. Together, they decide hospice care is the best option for AM. She is referred to VITAS for its American Heart Association-certified cardiac care program to manage her symptoms. VITAS coordinated for AM to be discharged home the same day, and delivered the medications, supplies, equipment and therapies she needed to begin feeling comfortable.

How VITAS can help

When VITAS begins providing cardiac-focused hospice care, an entire team of clinicians with specialized cardiac training work together to manage AM's symptoms and make her comfortable at home.

- A VITAS physician, nurse, and aide visit regularly to manage her SOB and make her comfortable. The same team collaborates with her cardiologist and provides AM's daughter and family with education on how to take care of her at home.
- All of the equipment and medications AM needs are delivered to her at home by VITAS, including cardiac medications, inhalers, portable oxygen, hospital bed and a portable toilet.
- A social worker helps with emotional issues and discusses AM and her daughter's goals for her care, while a chaplain supports AM and her family with spiritual issues.
- A grief specialist is available for up to 13 months after a death to support AM's family.

You never get an answering machine when you call VITAS. VITAS is always available to answer your questions. Call us 24/7 for assistance or care.