

Why You, An African American, Should Choose Hospice Care

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Your last days are sacred

Whether you view them as transitional or the final chapter, your last days hold unique promise for both you and those who love you. That is why the very first question on the spiritual assessment at Montgomery Hospice asks the patient and/or family member what is most meaningful in life at this point. Your answer to this question will help us co-create with you the best opportunity to have your desires met. Our goal is to make you as comfortable as possible and, thereby, maximize your ability to live as you choose.

Your choices are sacred

We are patient centered at Montgomery Hospice, which means we take direction and get permission from you. It is our responsibility to ensure that you receive all the information you need to make informed decisions about your care, even if you decide hospice is not what you want at this point. We know that African Americans are more inclined to want life prolonging treatments at life's end. We will give you honest feedback about your desires, but we will always honor your decisions (in accordance with regulations and the law). For example, if being resuscitated or re-hospitalized is what you want, despite medical projections of futility, then those options will

remain available to you. We will always discuss with you the benefits and side effects of pain medication needed to relieve your distress but then follow your direction. It's okay if you choose not to sleep in a hospital bed, but it is our duty to explain the advantages to both you and those who care for you who must safely reposition, lift and help you to the bathroom. Additionally, we cannot make you call us in the middle of the night when your concern is heightened, but we can certainly come when you call. At Montgomery Hospice we know that belief is a powerful medicine, which is why we would never stand in the way of your choices and why the choice we offer is the opportunity for a better quality of life.

Your trust is sacred

Some African Americans have little knowledge of hospice; the overwhelming desire to support their own makes exploring hospice care unnecessary. At Montgomery Hospice we want you to know that hospice is a supplement, not an alternative to family care. Other African Americans may have misconceptions about the definition of hospice. For example some may think of hospice as a place where one goes to die rather than a host of treatments and services provided wherever the patient resides. Still others may think hospice is all about morphine when, in fact, hospice personnel use many tools (medicinal and otherwise) to ensure comfort. We know there are African Americans who mistrust the practice of medicine; the infamous Tuskegee Study is very well known and contributes to fear that treatment will be denied, causing premature death if hospice is chosen. At Montgomery Hospice we regard your suspicions as healthy; it ensures that you are well informed and vigilant. We know that trust is a sacred gift that must be earned, so we invite your questions and concerns as we work to gain your confidence.

Montgomery HOSPICE

The desires of your heart are sacred

Working with your physician we address the ailments of your body so you are as free as possible from pain and physical distress; then you can focus on the concerns of your heart. We fervently pray for healing with and for you if that is your heart's desire, and if your body progressively fails we support you as you grieve the losses. We understand fear and anger however they are expressed and can help you to a more peaceful place if that's what you really want. We hear your concerns about loved ones, can help find them when estranged, and provide ongoing care for them well beyond your death. Most importantly, we understand that what many African Americans desire most is to know God, the "author and finisher" of one's fate, for when all else fails, God remains trustworthy and will get you through. At Montgomery Hospice we walk the final journey with you and support you as you stand on the tenets of your faith.

Your experience is sacred

Montgomery Hospice staff is well aware of these cultural underpinnings, historical facts and research findings; we keep them uppermost in our minds as we strive to ensure that your expectations for quality care are exceeded. Those who have utilized our services frequently wish that hospice had been engaged sooner. Our teams of nurses, chaplains, home health aids, social workers, bereavement counselors and volunteers are continually upgrading their skills and knowledge to ensure that the care you receive is state-of-the-art. Montgomery Hospice has almost thirty years of experience which have taught us that we must honor your last days, your choices and the desires of your heart to gain your trust and afford you an experience worthy of your sacred humanity.

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