



Hospice / Palliative Care

Policy:

Hospice patients/patients who have chosen palliative care will at times require transport by Union EMS.

Purpose:

To provide information and guidance for Union EMS employees to ensure these patients are transported and cared for in a manner that compliments their established care plan. While many patients/family agree to palliative care, as the patient becomes increasingly ill, they may be unsure of what to do and call EMS. The following procedures shall be followed to ensure that patients are getting the care they need without incurring unnecessary ambulance transport to the hospital.

Procedure:

1. There is more than one Hospice provider with patients in Union County. Ask the patient/family for the number to reach their Hospice nurse.
2. Call the Hospice nurse as soon as possible if they are not already on scene/enroute.
3. Evaluate the patient for immediate needs but involve the Hospice nurse in decisions about treatment/transport.
 - a. Many Hospice patients, even if having chest pain or other concerning symptoms do not need/desire transport to a hospital.
 - b. Let the Hospice nurse discuss options with the patient/family even if only on the phone.
 - c. The patient/family and Hospice nurse shall decide on an appropriate course of treatment and destination.
 - d. On scene the Hospice nurse shall be responsible for treatment/transport decisions. Once in the ambulance you are in charge but make every effort to continue the agreed upon treatment/transport plan.
4. After consulting with the Hospice nurse Union EMS employees may assist patients with their own medications. This is the preferred method of treatment as it follows the established care plan.
5. Do not get into the middle of arguments with the family and patient about treatment. Use the Hospice nurse as a resource. If the patient has decision making ability then he/she gets to determine care, not the family.
6. In the end if the person with decision making capacity wants transport then the patient should be transported.
7. The Union EMS on duty supervisor may also be a resource in unusual situations.
8. A Hospice nurse or physician may request transport to a Hospice Inpatient Facility. In this instance, due to the patient receiving palliative care, standard Union EMS transport plans are overridden and the patient shall be transported to the Hospice Inpatient Facility regardless of the patient's condition - i.e. chest pain, bleeding, abnormal vital signs, etc.
9. If you arrive at the scene of an unattended death of a known Hospice patient, contact the Hospice nurse prior to contacting law enforcement or following Union EMS guidelines for death notification. For their established patients, Hospice will handle the death documentation/notifications.
10. If you are transporting a Hospice patient and they expire enroute, stop at the first available safe location and contact the on duty Union EMS Supervisor for guidance.