Ensuring the Best End of Life Care

The end of life is feared by many due to the unknown suffering of physical pain, or the lack of support from loved ones. It is a difficult time, especially for those who are facing such situations alone. Lack of knowledge and planning can be a great obstacle. It is important to remember there are many options that can help relieve stress and prepare the terminally ill and their families. The good news is that times have changed and society has presented many opportunities to improve end of life care. With careful and advance planning, patients and their families can be sure this final journey is physically and psychologically painless as possible.

As people grow old, the constant thought of leaving everything behind becomes daunting. Because of this, legal options are available for seniors and the terminally ill. The options to have a durable power of attorney and living will are becoming more popular. While writing a living will or a power of attorney, the patient should have a sound knowledge of their physical and mental condition. There is no one better than your health care provider to keep you aware of your physical and mental health.

The most commonly feared end of life issues are physical pain, dealing with family relationships, and fear of the unknown. Although there is much to fear, the end of life can be a time of comfort and peace if the right assistance and plan are set in place. Finishing the “bucket list” or mending broken relationships can be a great way to end a journey and be ready for the next step in life. Due to medical advancements, the journey through the end of life can be physically painless and near emotionally stress free.

Hospice care can be defined as a program that is designed to help minimize the physical and psychological pain, including stress for people within the last months of their lives. The conditions of such patients are diagnosed by their physicians or determined by patients who have chosen to end their treatment for a terminal disease.

With hospice care, the patient can rest assured that the last days of their lives are well spent with minimal pain and in the company of loved ones. The driving force behind hospice care is to take care of peoples with the understanding that there is no cure for old age or some terminal illnesses. It allows the elderly to be comfortable at this stage in life, and assures that the elderly and terminally ill can leave this world with minimal stress or pain. Caregivers of such hospice care monitor pain medication and other indications of stress. By doing this, each patient under hospice care can be in a constant comfortable stage. Some programs also provide support for families and assist in counseling, mentoring, and methods of communications. Although hospice programs are recommended and available for those with a life expectancy of six months or less, it is usually within the last weeks of the patient’s life that the patient is placed under hospice care.

Medicare offers hospice programs that will help monitor the patient’s diet, pain medication, nursing care, social worker services, and doctor services. For more information on whether your healthcare plan covers such a service, it is best to contact your healthcare provider. Aging and the end of life can be a frightening place but with medical technology continuing to advance it can be less ominous. The important thing is to have a support group to help plan your journey and guide you to the end.

Besides hospice care, palliative care is also available for the elderly and those with terminal diseases. However, it is offered more often for those suffering from longer term diseases or those who are already receiving treatment. Unlike hospice care, palliative care is for patients that may or may not be terminally ill. Reliving pain and improving physical symptoms to help patients
carry out daily activities are the main objectives of palliative care. The team that provides this sort of care works closely with the patient and their families to ensure maximum effectiveness when it comes to reducing pain and emotional stress. They can also provide a support network for those affected by the patient’s physical or mental illness.

Everyone will eventually grow old and face many of the same obstacles regarding the end of life. The key to having a peaceful and meaningful end of life lies within the knowledge and planning of the patient and their families. With careful planning and support, this can be a fulfilling life experience.

When negative symptoms of health start to show in the caregiver, it is probably time to start considering the transfer of care to a specializing professional or to a nursing home.

The decision of moving a loved one into a nursing home or care facility can be hard, but it will only become harder if the decision is made well after it is needed. The transferring of patients to a care facility can reduce the stress in a family caregiver and also help the patient improve physically and mentally. With professional care, the patient is able to carry out daily routines with less pain and effectively use their abilities to the full potential. Although it might be hard to adjust, and not everyone wants their loved ones to be cared for by others, sometimes such decisions are the best decision. It cannot be emphasized enough that planning can be the root to succeeding when it comes to determining end of life situations. Open communication between the patients, families, and physicians can alleviate many questions or confusions in this stage in life. Pain can come packaged with the end of life, but it is our option to be prepared and face it without fears.

Determining the Level of Care

As humans, we face deteriorating health as we age. At some point in our lives, we will need the assistance of others in carrying out daily routines and to monitor our health. When the time comes for us to accept such care from others, we must determine which level of care and from whom.

Caregivers often times do not provide care for only one person and this can be an emotional burden for both the caregiver and the patient. More common care giving can be found in homes in which the elderly aren’t the only patients. This can create a strain in the caregiver’s emotional and physical strength due to lack of self-awareness. When caregivers spend most of their day caring for others, their health and happiness becomes a second priority. Common effects a caregiver can experience are depression and physical illness.