



ABC Hospice
INC.

A caring touch, a hand of compassion

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HEART DISEASE

The heart is the center of the cardiovascular system. Through the body's blood vessels, the heart pumps blood to all of the body's cells. The blood carries oxygen, which the cells need. Heart disease is a group of problems that occur when the heart and blood vessels aren't working the way they should.

Being diagnosed with a terminal illness is devastating. ABC Hospice will take this journey with you.

The following criteria can be helpful in determining the eligibility of a patient to qualify for services offered through hospice. ABC Hospice is available to answer any questions you may have.

The medical criteria listed below would support a terminal prognosis for individuals with a diagnosis of heart disease. Medical criteria 1 and 2 are important indications of the severity of heart disease and would thus support a terminal prognosis if met:

1. At the time of initial certification or re-certification for hospice:

Patient is already optimally treated with diuretics and vasodilators, which may include angiotensin-converting Enzymes (ACE) inhibitors or the combination of hydralazine and nitrates. If side effects, such as hypotension or hyperkalemia, prohibit the use of ACE inhibitors or the combination of hydralazine and nitrates, this must be documented in the medical records.

- or -

Patient is having angina pectoris, at rest, resistant to standard nitrate therapy and is either not a candidate or declines invasive procedures.

2. The patient has significant symptoms of recurrent congestive heart failure (CHF) at rest, and is classified as a New York Heart Association (NYHA) Class IV (includes all of the following):

- Unable to carry on any physical activity without symptoms
- Symptoms are present even at rest
- If any physical activity is undertaken, symptoms are increased

3. Documentation of the following factors may provide additional support for end-stage heart disease:

- Treatment resistant symptomatic supraventricular or ventricular arrhythmias
- History of cardiac arrest or resuscitation
- History of unexplained syncope
- Brain embolism of cardiac origin
- Concomitant HIV disease
- Documentation of ejection fraction of 20% or less