

What to Know about Becoming a Hospice Volunteer

Hospice Care is dedicated to guiding people through their end-of-life journey with as many forms of support and comfort as possible - both for the patient and their caregivers.

All people share the common experience of birth and death – these are natural parts of everyone’s life, and each person’s passages are unique. Yet often our culture makes death seem unnatural or alien. Far from giving up, hospice care helps families truly live well and support each other during a stressful, but, in the end, very natural life passage.

Hospice is a philosophy of care that treats each *person* rather than their disease and focuses on quality of life. Hospice surrounds patients and families with a team of professionals and volunteers who not only address a patient’s physical needs, but also the emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their caregivers. Hospice care is patient-centered because the needs of each patient and family are unique. The emphasis is on quality of life and easing distress, so our patients can spend their remaining time focused on things that are the most meaningful and important to *them*.

As a hospice volunteer, you would be joining and contributing to that circle of support. If you are drawn to consider offering this service at Cooley-Dickinson Hospice, [here are a few qualities you’ll need](#):

- Flexibility for responding to short notice, changes in plans, surprising needs and reactions
- Ability to “tune in” to others -- better at listening than talking
- Resourcefulness in finding ways to make conversation, offer help and ask for help
- Calmness in settings where people are ill and/or dying, whether in nursing homes, assisted living facilities or their own homes
- Ease with entering new settings and unfamiliar groups of people
- Rewarded by being a small part of someone’s very big picture
- A year or so has passed since any close personal loss and bereavement

Being able to give the gift of time and talent is one of the volunteer’s best rewards. Volunteers who are certified in complimentary therapies such as massage, Reiki, music, art, pet therapy, or other complimentary tools are wonderful assets to our care team.

Cooley-Dickinson VNA & Hospice provides hospice volunteer training programs to groups of 5-15 people who meet these hospice volunteer requirements:

- Willing to complete about 20 hours of training and can make a commitment to a minimum of one year's availability for assignments that would involve one to four hours a week.
- You are a licensed driver with an automobile, up-to-date auto insurance and ability to take assignments involving driving as much as 20 miles in a round trip.
- You will agree to a CORI check as well as our employee health screening requirements for staff involved in direct patient contact.
- You will agree to health precautions and confidentiality standards required of all health care providers.

To discuss your interest, please contact our Hospice Volunteer Coordinator:

Tina Leflar, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator
VNA & Hospice of Cooley Dickinson
168 Industrial Drive
Northampton, MA 01060

Phone: 413-584-1060 | **Fax:** 413-584-7908

Email: cleflar@mgb.org

Next Steps:

- Complete an application that includes a description of why you are drawn to volunteer, the life experience you bring and the names of two references we can contact.
- Arrange for a personal interview.
- You will be notified of your application status when completed.

**Thank you for your interest in becoming a Hospice Volunteer.
We look forward to working with you!**