



SAN DIEGO HOSPICE
and The Institute for Palliative Medicine

Volunteer Resources Program

Direct Patient Care

Patient Care Volunteers are part of a patient's care team. They make home visits to offer companionship for patients and relief for caregivers. Activities may include reading to the patient, assisting with a hobby, listening, running errands, or grocery shopping.

- Direct Patient Care applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
- Volunteers make a one-year minimum commitment to the program.
- Volunteers are expected to give approximately four hours per week.
- Because of the sensitive nature of direct patient care, volunteers must successfully complete a screening process. The screening process includes an initial interview/orientation, a training course, and assessment by the supervisor at the completion of training.
- All volunteers who provide direct patient care are required to complete a 16-hour patient care volunteer training class. Our training is offered several times throughout the year.
- Admission to the training class and/or completion of the training class does not guarantee acceptance as a patient care volunteer.
- Patient care training includes:
 - Hospice philosophy and goals
 - Communication skills
 - Pain and symptom control
 - Psychosocial dynamics
 - Ethical issues
 - Personal death awareness
 - Physical care
 - Spiritual support
 - Grief and bereavement
 - Cultural diversity
- After completing the training course and having a patient assigned, each volunteer is expected to attend regularly scheduled Supportive Supervision meetings. This allows volunteers to receive emotional support and share experiences with their peers and supervisors.
- Continuing educational opportunities are offered throughout each year