

HOSPICE AND END OF LIFE

Rev. Dr. Cindy Savage-King
Hospice Chaplain

WHAT IS HOSPICE?



For the terminally ill
2 doctors must sign off on terminal illness

Terminal illness: patient will die within six months if disease takes its normal course

Patient receives access to multidisciplinary team who *specializes in end-of-life care*

Nurse case manager

Social worker

Chaplain

Health aide/CNA

WHAT IS HOSPICE? CON'T

A person enters “benefit periods.”

- First two periods are 90 days.
- After that, all benefit periods are 60 days.
- The patient is evaluated and “recertified,” if appropriate

Treatment may be in a home, a long-term care facility, or a hospital

Goal is to prioritize comfort, quality of life, and individual wishes

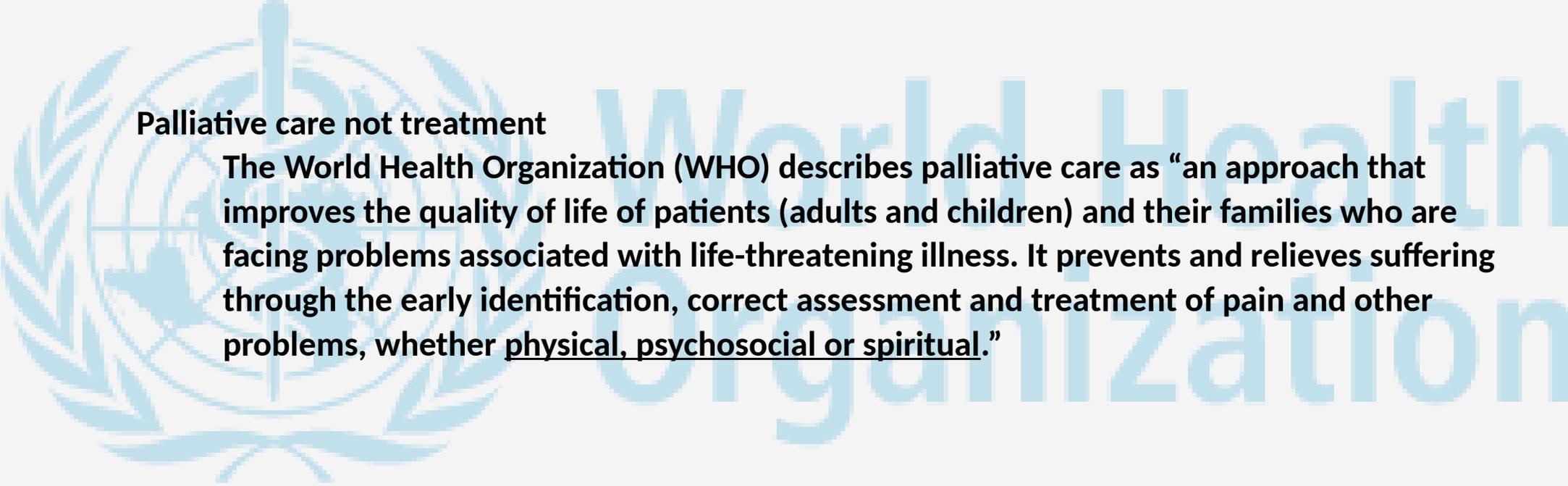


Palliative Care

Symptom management of a life-limiting illness.

Hospice Care

Symptom management and comfort care at the end of life.



Palliative care not treatment

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes palliative care as “an approach that improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing problems associated with life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual.”

(from the WHO website www.who.int)

MYTHS ABOUT HOSPICE

It costs too much.

- **It usually costs nothing. Medicare or private insurance usually covers the cost. Medications related to the illness also are**

It means we've given up.

- **As mentioned, it takes two physicians to sign off on the terminal illness, that there are no further treatment options. That being said, a patient/family still has the option to pursue treatment. The patient would need to come off hospice, but they could come back on at any time. There is no limit to the number of times a person**

Being on hospice shortens a person's life.

- **The opposite is true. Studies show that being on hospice actually prolongs life, usually around a month longer.**

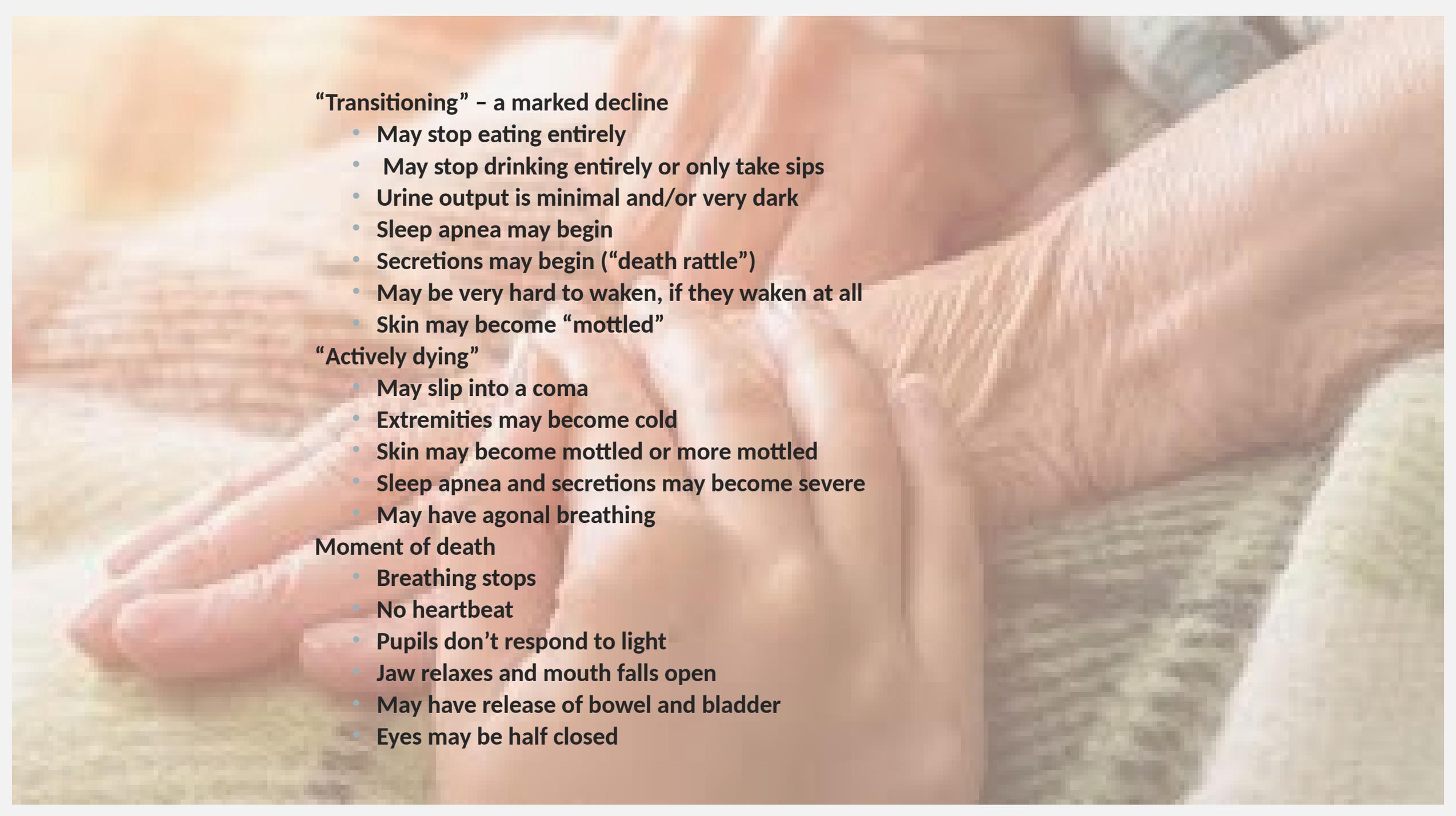
THE DYING PROCESS
(LARGE PARTS TAKEN FROM "WHEN THE
TIME COMES")

Varies from person to person and
disease to disease

No one knows when someone is
going to die but most go through
certain stages

Signs the body may be slowing
down

- **Increased confusion**
- **May become incontinent of bladder and bowel**
- **Increased restlessness and anxiety**
- **May sleep more and more (20+ hours a day)**
- **May eat and drink less**
- **May see family/loved ones who have already passed on**



“Transitioning” - a marked decline

- May stop eating entirely
- May stop drinking entirely or only take sips
- Urine output is minimal and/or very dark
- Sleep apnea may begin
- Secretions may begin (“death rattle”)
- May be very hard to waken, if they waken at all
- Skin may become “mottled”

“Actively dying”

- May slip into a coma
- Extremities may become cold
- Skin may become mottled or more mottled
- Sleep apnea and secretions may become severe
- May have agonal breathing

Moment of death

- Breathing stops
- No heartbeat
- Pupils don’t respond to light
- Jaw relaxes and mouth falls open
- May have release of bowel and bladder
- Eyes may be half closed

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO MINISTER TO SOMEONE WHO IS DYING?