

# Intermountain Homecare & Hospice one of 140 hospices selected nationwide to participate in Medicare Care Choices Model

*Model aims to increase choice and quality by enabling individuals to receive palliative and curative care concurrently*

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA, July 29, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Intermountain Homecare & Hospice](#), part of the Utah-based [Intermountain Healthcare](#) system, has been selected to participate in the Medicare Care Choices Model, announced today by Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell. The model provides Medicare beneficiaries who qualify for coverage under the Medicare Hospice Benefit and dually eligible beneficiaries who qualify for the Medicaid Hospice Benefit the option to elect to receive supportive care services typically provided by hospice and continue to receive curative services at the same



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*Erin Shadbolt, Intermountain Homecare & Hospice*

time. The model is part of a larger effort across the nation to transform our health care system to deliver better care, spend our dollars in a smarter way, and put patients in the center of their care.

The goal of the Care Choices model is to provide better care for individuals with advanced cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), congestive heart failure, and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. “By introducing these patients to expert end-of-life care earlier, we have an opportunity to better improve quality of life for these individuals and help them meet their goals in their own home,” said Erin Shadbolt, Intermountain Homecare & Hospice Palliative Care administrator.

“This is potentially a great benefit to patients and their families,” said Shadbolt. “Before Care Choices, patients would lose coverage of most curative care when choosing hospice care. Because of this, it is common that patients wouldn’t choose hospice care until the last two or three weeks of life, which can limit the benefits patients can access with hospice.”

“Care Choices is really about flexibility to provide the proper care for patients,” said Shadbolt. “Patients will now have a wider variety of choices. For example, cancer patients can continue to receive chemo or radiation treatment. And for doctors, knowing their patients can still access curative care means they will be more likely to refer them to hospice care sooner.”

“Hospice has a unique focus on helping patients achieve goals and improve quality of life,” said Shadbolt. “Patients receiving curative care may be reluctant to talk to their doctor about goals, such as going to a wedding or making it to a holiday. Hospice care helps patients identify these goals and come up with a plan to achieve them. Collaboration between hospice and curative care may give an individual a better chance of reaching these goals. There is also not the stigma of ‘giving up,’ so patients do better psychologically as well.”

Individuals are only eligible for the Medicare Care Choices Model if they meet certain criteria:

- Must be diagnosed with certain terminal illnesses (e.g., advanced cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome);
- Must meet hospice eligibility requirements under the Medicare or Medicaid Hospice Benefit;
- Must not have elected the Medicare or Medicaid Hospice Benefit within the last 30 days prior to their participation in the Medicare Care Choices Model;
- Must receive services from a hospice that is participating in the model; and
- Must have satisfied the model's other eligibility criteria.

"We estimate that this project will help at least 300 patients a year with life-limiting illnesses in our system," said Shadbolt.

Intermountain is one of only 140 Medicare Care Choices Model-certified hospices around the country and the only provider in Utah. CMS expects as many as 150,000 Medicare beneficiaries will be able to take advantage of this new flexible benefit over the next five years.

"Intermountain Homecare & Hospice is excited to be able to provide this service," added Shadbolt. "We see our involvement in this project as shaping the future of end-of-life care."

For more information, visit <http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/Medicare-Care-Choices/>

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