Comfort Care Program of VITAS Healthcare

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Introduction

This paper aims to provide an effective brief profile of a company, while also giving a short history. The paper will fundamentally study the topic of comfort care in terms of the chosen company. Moreover, the paper will include a short set of testimonials in order to provide evidence of the company's comfort care program. The chosen company is VITAS Healthcare, which aims to provide hospice and palliative care-related resources. It also provides medical care for the well-being of patients, caregiving practices, and end-of-life care program strategies. Overall, the company is serving its purpose in a valuable manner.

VITAS Healthcare

From a personal point of view, almost everyone believes in planning their future regarding care programs. The company assists its patients by providing them with a stronger future regarding coping with serious illnesses, and it has been serving for 35 years as the market leader of the hospice care industry. The company states that its number one asset is its patients, which never leads it into hasty decisions regarding their future.

How the Hospital Caters Comfort Care?

The patients help them by providing a basic standpoint for the demands of their services. The company's job is to make its patients courageous and strong-willed in terms of practicing the care program. Now, it is serving as the premier national hospice center. It was established in 1992, and especially VITAS Innovative Hospice was the organization's pioneering work. Vita is a word derived from Latin and is known as life. It basically symbolizes the company's mission to serve its people with care and utmost attention simply. Although the company is a not-for-profit organization, when it began to be successful, it required more resources to provide even better input in hospice care. Eventually, the company became a for-profit organization, and now it is the leading hospice program provider in the industry.

Hospice care is appropriate when, as the company states, "If your or a loved one has been given a prognosis of six months or less, hospice offers the symptom management, pain control, and personal

care you need to remain at home in comfort and with dignity as your illness runs its course." Choosing hospice care has been a vital quality of one's health life. This is why the organization aims to provide all the facilities to its patients regarding hospice aid, even serving as their social work chaplain, bereavement, and volunteer. Before giving someone the hospice care program, the company even clears misconceptions as well as myths related to the illness. The company also gives details regarding the different ways to receive hospice care; for example, the company's website says, "Hospice care is brought to seriously ill patients wherever they call home—a private residence, assisted living community or nursing home." From an average person to a knowledgeable and well-aware person, everyone can understand the program as the practitioners there explain it quite well.

The palliative care program is another important care service provided to cancer patients at VITAS Healthcare. This is specialized for cancer patients. The company's website contains highly encouraging words that must be shared: "As a cancer patient, you are not alone, but every patient experiences his or her disease differently."

Moreover, the company's sense of diversity and openness is rare to see in the 21st century, according to the personal viewpoint; therefore, the company further mentions that "Your age, race, culture, support system and unique personality all play a part in your disease and your feelings of wellbeing. They also play a role in the kinds of palliative care you may want. Palliative care does not cure or treat your cancer."

From palliative to hospice care, comfort care is an important part of everyone's life; therefore, the company's valuable work holds a huge significance for society. The company also provides brief details differentiating and comparing the two kinds of care, i.e., palliative care as well as hospice care. Its website is very well curated regarding the research and communication of its experience on kinds of care programs. The company states, "Palliative care does not cure or treat your cancer. Instead, palliative care relieves physical, emotional, and psychosocial symptoms. It can begin when you are diagnosed with cancer and continue through all phases of treatment and follow-up to the end of life." (Halabi, 67)

There are three different kinds of care under the palliative and hospice care programs. Every kind has different strategies, including coping, physical, practical, spiritual, and quality of life. Every patient has a different requirement to fulfill; therefore, the company must aim to provide each kind of care program with different and individualistic criteria. The hospital's best part is that its comfort care programs are very well tailored according to individualistic needs.

As the company says, "Palliative care is offered by cancer centers and hospitals, which have palliative specialists or a whole team on staff. Some cancer centers have programs or clinics that address specific palliative issues, such as lymphedema, pain management, sexual functioning, or psychosocial issues." Hence, all of these mentioned issues are important and arise in every individual's life; therefore, the hospital is maintaining a sound standard in providing the right care program for the right person. (Johnson, 12)

The Purpose of a Comfort Care

Comfort care is an essential part of medical care and, therefore, it occurs at the end of life. It basically helps soothe a person who is close to dying. For example, this comfort care practice is usually tailored for senior citizens. The purpose of comfort care is to provide prevention and relieving strategies for those suffering spiritually, emotionally, mentally, or physically. It is significant because it improves one's quality of life and respects one's dying wishes. Every person wants to die in a peaceful way; comfort care is an excellent choice for that matter.

This is why the company has studied both kinds of care through research and experience and, therefore, is able to serve as the national premier hospital. As it states, "Hospice care is similar to palliative care, but there are important differences. Because more than 90 percent of hospice care is paid for through the Medicare hospice benefit, hospice patients must meet Medicare's eligibility requirements, which palliative care patients do not." The statistics state that there is a huge need for comfort care in the country and, therefore, that it is important for every being's end-of-life caretaking practices. (Byock, 42)

The objective of comfort care is to provide pain and symptom relief usually experienced by senior citizens on a larger scale due to their old age. According to VITAS, hospice and palliative care are very similar but have certain important differences. On the other hand, the prognosis and goals of the care program differ, but the objective remains the same. As the company states and briefly describes the difference in a well-drafted and researched explanation, "Hospice is comfort care without curative intent; the patient no longer has curative options or has chosen not to pursue treatment because the side effects outweigh the benefits. Palliative care is comfort care with or without curative intent."

Curative treatment is highly important for a person's well-being. Certain kinds of people reject curative treatment because they have limited ability and knowledge to care for themselves. However, it is a wrong notion that is still quite practiced despite the knowledge of these programs. Moreover, the patient may also have received a curative treatment that no longer benefits their health system. In this case, if the patient is aware of their illness and conditions, they must reject the care programs. The patients may even be disqualified for the purpose of a suitable clinical trial. This process is led by the hospital's team, which works effectively to tailor the palliative or hospice care program to the patient's well-being. Sometimes, it is also stated that there is no such evidence for further treatment for the patient and, therefore, there is no need for a care program. Hence, comfort care is highly influential in helping people die peacefully, which is everyone's personal wish. For the purpose of providing well-tailored comfort care, the company has highly qualified and experienced interdisciplinary teams that also do the job of communicating with the patients. The company states on its webpage that "Interdisciplinary teams deliver both hospice and palliative care. They address physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, including such common worries as loss of independence, the well-being of the family, and feeling like a burden."

Besides this, the cost of comfort care is also 100% assured by the Medicaid program. Medicaid as well as private insurance is a highly important subject that an old age individual must learn, especially regarding the facilities it includes. They include pharmaceuticals, 24/6 care access, medical equipment, nursing assistance, social services, some important visits related to chaplains, support of grief after death, and other services provided as well by the hospice agency. Comfort care is an important practice and facility well-curated by the VITAS Healthcare team. Further, some testimonials provide evidence for the reasoning and details mentioned throughout the discussion.

Testimonials by the Patients: A Highlight of VITAS Stories

Tuskegee Airman states, “VITAS’ specially trained staff and volunteers work to honor veterans’ wishes & ensure they receive the respect, comfort, compassion & tributes they deserve.” Mr. David Peden stated, “I started volunteering with VITAS in the summer of 2016 after a 40-year career as a lifeguard. I hoped to make my retirement more rewarding, and I wanted to return to being of service.”

Moreover, Jacquelyn arrived at VITAS for her mother’s treatment; she said, “Later that day, VITAS installed hospital beds, a Hoyer lift to get Jacquelyn’s husband in and out of bed, a walker for Elizabeth, and other supplies.”

“They tended to both my husband and my mother,” Jacquelyn says. “I had an aide who came every day. If my husband got sick at night, all I had to do was call. VITAS would answer my call and send a nurse out, if that’s what was needed, no matter what time of night it was.”

Another patient testimonial about Terry includes, “Terry chose VITAS for his young wife Jenny, who had Huntington’s disease, a fatal, inherited disease that affects nerve cells in the brain. VITAS helped care for Jenny while VITAS Community Connection helped Terry, Jenny, and their two children with financial needs.” (Field, 141)

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