

Dear Olivia



OLIVIA ROGERS is a leading voice in health care and senior services and the Chief Nursing Officer of VNA Texas.

Dear Olivia,

We are considering starting our mother on hospice services sometime soon, as her physician thinks that it might be time to keep her at home and prevent any further hospitalizations. She has been frail for some time now and he feels she may need this extra layer of support and care. How do we know when the time is right? Also, are there any supports our family can receive if we need to go out of town to see our grown children while she is on hospice service?

-Difficult decisions

Dear Difficult decisions,

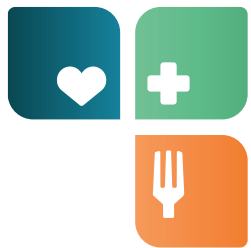
It is often a difficult decision to put a loved one on hospice service, even when we know that may be the best way to provide the appropriate level of care. Skilled hospice care can provide comprehensive, holistic care to both the patient and family when someone is facing a terminal illness or condition.

Starting hospice at the right time is important to ensure that the care team has a chance to get to

know the patient and family and establish the best plan of care possible. The “right time” to transition someone to hospice is different for every family, but two important considerations are whether further aggressive treatment is desired or available, and if the patient would want to return to the hospital. If the answer to both questions is no, then this is often the right time to choose hospice care.

In terms of travel, one of the best benefits of hospice for families is a service called respite care. This is one of the levels of care we can provide. This allows a patient to stay in an inpatient setting, such as a nursing facility, for up to five consecutive days for caregiver relief. This means that the family can travel, see other loved ones, or even just have a much-needed respite from caregiving, knowing that their loved one is safe and being checked on daily by hospice staff. Hospice really can help families take care of loved ones as they navigate the challenges of end-of-life care.

~Olivia



Visiting Nurse Association

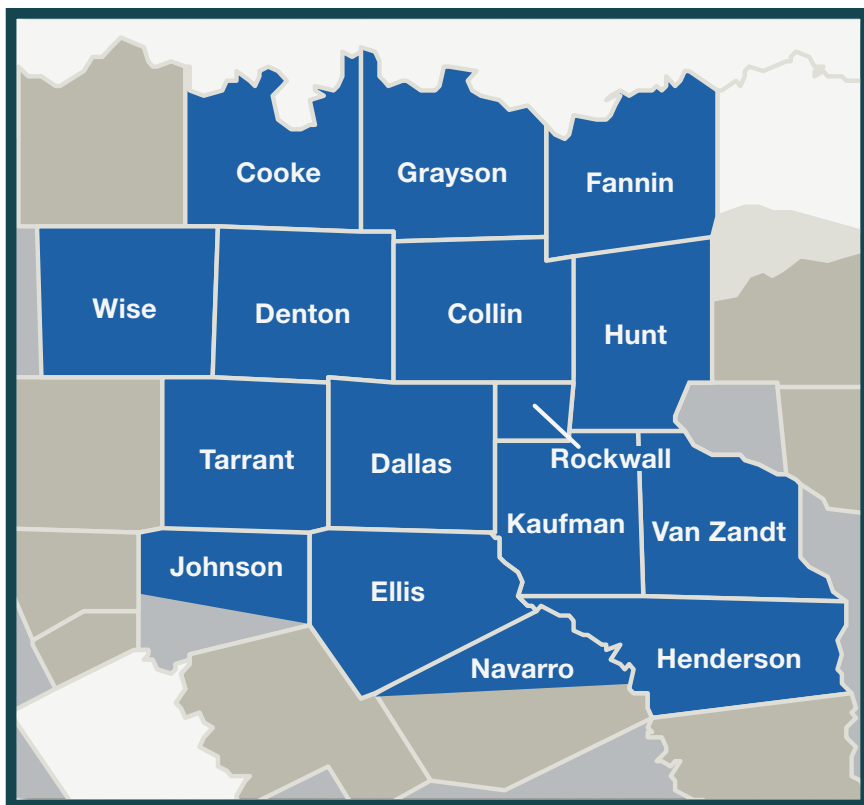
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Established in 1934, VNA is a nonprofit organization that helps our elderly neighbors and loved ones maintain their independence by providing the services that allow them to age where they are happiest and most comfortable – at home. Caring, listening and responding to our patients' quality of life and comfort issues is what we have done for more than 85 years.

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