

Information and Resources for Healthcare Professionals

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care focuses on the relief of pain, symptoms and the stress of serious illness.




- The goal is to reduce suffering and improve quality of life for individuals and families.
- Palliative care is provided at any stage of an illness and can be provided simultaneously with curative treatment.
- Palliative care is typically provided by an interdisciplinary team of professionals that may include, but is not limited to: physicians, advanced practice nurses, registered nurses, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists and dietitians, depending upon the needs of the patient and family.
- For many individuals, it is transitioning from one setting to another that contributes to poor outcomes with multiple re-hospitalizations. Palliative care may be provided in a variety of settings, (hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, assisted living, home, and out-patient clinics) in order to assure continuity of care in multiple settings over the course of the disease process.

Why Should a Primary Care Physician, Oncologist or Other Specialist Refer to a Palliative Care Team?

- For support to seriously ill patients who have complex pain and symptom management issues.
- For support to seriously ill patients who have a high need for patient and family communication.
- To bring the entire team to the table in addressing multiple issues facing the patient and family.
- To meet the communication needs of the patient and ensure fully informed consent, based on the benefits and burdens of the treatments and the wishes of the patient and family.

EXAMPLES OF

Typical Palliative Care Referrals:

-  Patient/family/physician needs help with complex treatment decision-making and determination of care goals
-  Patient is experiencing physical pain, psychosocial or spiritual suffering and/or other symptom distress
-  Prolonged hospital stay without evidence of improvement
-  ICU patient with documented poor prognosis
-  Withdrawal of life-support in the ICU
-  Care of the dying patient and support of the family
-  Assistance needed to determine hospice eligibility

Caring Connections
a program of the
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

Frequently Asked Questions

Who Sets the Standards for Quality Palliative Care Organizations?

- National Consensus Project
www.nationalconsensusproject.org
- National Quality Forum
www.qualityforum.org

Who provides Palliative Care in My Community?

Have a Question About Palliative Care?

- Center to Advance Palliative Care www.capc.org
- End of Life/Palliative Education Resource Center (EPERC) www.eperc.mcw.edu
- National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization www.nhpc.org

Interested in Becoming a Palliative Care Professional?

- American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) www.aahpm.org

The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) is an organization of physicians and other medical professionals dedicated to excellence in and advancement of palliative medicine through prevention and relief of patient and family suffering by providing education and clinical practice standards, fostering research, facilitating personal and professional development, and by public policy advocacy. The web site includes meetings, self-study opportunities, publications, and a continuing education curriculum.

- Hospice and Palliative Nursing Association (HPNA) www.hpna.org

Hospice and Palliative Nursing Association (HPNA) is a nationally recognized organization providing resources and support for advanced practice nurses, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants who care for those with palliative care needs. The web site includes details on educational offerings and testing for certification and credentialing in palliative care.

- The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) www.nhpc.org.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), the leader in end-of-life care education, offers a variety of learning opportunities throughout the year via online

courses and national conferences. The web site lists upcoming educational opportunities and provides other professional resources.

- The following is a selection of colleges offering courses in palliative care – see web sites for current information on each program.

- Daemen College, Amherst NY
www.daemen.edu
- Madonna University, Livonia MI
www.madonna.edu
- Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston SC
www.musc.edu
- New York University, New York NY
www.nyu.edu
- University of Alabama, Birmingham AL
www.main.uab.edu
- University of California, San Francisco CA
www.ucsf.edu
- University of Illinois, Chicago IL
www.uic.edu
- Ursuline College, Pepper Pike OH
www.ursuline.edu
- Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN
www.vanderbilt.edu

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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