

So What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is the medical specialty focused on relief of the pain and other symptoms of serious illness. The goal is to prevent and ease suffering and to offer patients and their families the best possible quality of life.

It is appropriate at any point in a serious or life threatening illness. It is not dependent on prognosis. It can be provided at the same time as curative and life prolonging treatment.



What Can Palliative Care Do for Me?

The palliative care team helps you and your family cope with the challenges of your illness by assisting you and your family to:

- make decisions regarding your goals of care
- make decisions around treatment plans
- provide relief and help you manage the uncomfortable physical, emotional and spiritual symptoms of your illness
- help you identify resources that may help you through this time
- assist you with advanced care planning so you can plan for future medical and financial needs
- communicate with other family members who may have questions or have difficulty coping with your illness

Who Provides Palliative Care Services?

The palliative care team is made up of a variety of health care providers who are specially trained in palliative care and may include:

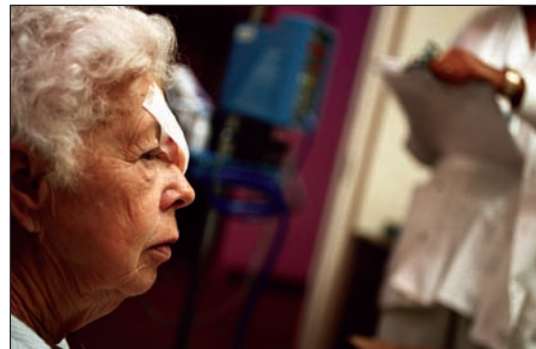
- Nurses
- Doctors
- Bereavement Support
- Chaplains
- Dieticians
- Nurses Aides
- Pharmacists
- Social Workers
- Therapists
- Volunteers

Other community supports such as home delivered meals.

How is Palliative Care Different from Hospice Care?

Hospice care is a phase of palliative care for which you may be eligible when:

- you and your family determine that you wish to no longer receive life prolonging treatment and,
- the doctor has certified that, if your illness were allowed to progress its natural course, there is reason to believe end of life is near, generally considered six months or less. Many patients often do very well under hospice care and may live longer.



Where Can I Receive Palliative Care?

Palliative care can be provided wherever the patient resides:

- Home
- Hospice Facilities
- Assisted Living
- Nursing Facility
- Hospital



How is My Palliative Care Paid For?

Palliative care may be covered under your insurance plan. You may wish to talk to your insurance company about any specific information regarding coverage and co-pays but typically:

- **Non-Hospice Palliative Care** – Each item will be billed separately much like it is now. Palliative care bills for symptoms (i.e. pain/difficulty breathing) whereas the attending or managing physician/providers bill for a disease process (i.e., congestive heart failure or cancer).
- **Hospice Palliative Care** – Health care, medications and equipment covered by Hospice need to be related to the terminal diagnosis. Coverage may be paid on a daily (per diem) basis, or your insurance company may choose to manage it much like an HMO may manage the care. All other health care, medications and equipment not related to the terminal diagnosis would be covered the same as usual.

How Do I Find a Palliative Care Team in My Area?

Call your physician, local hospital or local hospice to ask for resources about services or type of palliative care availability in your area.

Also, www.getpalliativecare.org/providers/mi will give you the choice to search by state and city for a palliative care team near you.

How Do I Learn More About Palliative Care?

Go to www.getpalliativecare.org or www.capc.org for more information.



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DEMYSTIFYING PALLIATIVE CARE



Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

Helen Keller • *Optimism*, 1909