

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE

PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care is a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of life for people who are living with serious or potentially life-limiting illnesses. Palliative care programs at UPMC are made up of a multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, therapists, counselors, and social workers. The team works in collaboration with a patient's entire care team of physicians and nurses, and with the patient and their family to provide medical, emotional, and social support needed to cope with the burdens of a serious illness.

Since no two patients are alike, palliative care treatments are tailored to the individual based on his or her medical needs and his or her wishes for how they want to be treated – physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Palliative care is a resource available for anyone with a serious or life-limiting illness. Some types of conditions that may be appropriate to receive palliative care include cancer, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, liver failure or end-stage kidney disease .

Palliative care provides treatments for symptoms even if the underlying disease cannot be cured. The main goals of palliative care are to relieve the pain and suffering and discomfort associated with an illness and to reduce patient and family members' stress.

Palliative care can be provided in a number of care settings including a patient's home, outpatient palliative care clinics, in nursing homes, hospitals, or other specialized clinics.

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HOSPICE CARE

While palliative care is available to any patient with a serious illness, hospice care is a specialized type of palliative care for patients suffering from an incurable illness or multiple illnesses with a life expectancy of six months or less. Hospice care is focused on improving quality of life, maintaining dignity, and making patients as comfortable as possible during the time they have remaining. The hospice care team is a multidisciplinary team made up of doctors, nurses, social workers, trained volunteers, and spiritual advisors. Hospice care can be provided in the home or in a facility such as a hospital, nursing home, or a dedicated hospice care facility.

Patients entering hospice care understand that their illness or disease is not responding to medical treatment. By entering hospice, attempts to cure the patient's underlying illness are stopped. Stopping curative treatment does not mean discontinuing all treatment. For example, if a patient is being treated for high blood pressure with medication, he or she will continue receiving those treatments in addition to the treatments they are receiving to manage the symptoms of their terminal illness.

Patients can elect to leave hospice care at any time if he or she decides that they want to resume curative treatments. Patients may also leave hospice care if their condition improves.



Contact US

To learn more about the UPMC Palliative and Supportive Institute, its team, or programs and services for patients and families, call **1-855-565-7146** or send an email to psicare@upmc.edu