Palliative Care: 
Finding Common Ground

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Why Palliative Care?
Palliative Care

• Specialized medical care for people living with serious medical illness.

• Focused on relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness.

• Goal is to improve quality of life for both patients and families.
Palliative Care

• Provided by a specially trained team of doctors, nurses, and other specialists

• Works together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support

• Appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness

• Can be provided along with curative care
Palliative Care

• Improves quality of life of patients and their families through the prevention and relief of suffering

• Early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual.
Definitions

Curative Medicine

Palliative Medicine

hospice
Palliative Care

• Is applicable early in the course of illness in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy

• Includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications.

• BASED ON NEED, NOT ON PROGNOSIS
There is nothing in life really worth doing that isn’t going to be difficult.
• Approximately 90 million Americans are living with serious illness, and this number will more than double over the next 25 years.

• Approximately 6,000,000 in the US could benefit from Palliative Care.
Illnesses Most Commonly Treated by Palliative Care

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Stroke,
- Diabetes
- Renal Disease
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Alzheimer’s Disease
Most Inpatient Programs are Underutilized

• Ideal Consult Range 5%-10%
• Actual Consult Range 2%-4%

CAPC- Palliative Care Facts and Stats
The quality of communication is the strongest independent predictor of readmissions.

Everything is better with a team.
Palliative Care uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and families.

- Doctors
  - Palliative Care Doctors
  - Other Doctors
- Nurses
- Social Workers
- Pharmacists
- Chaplains
- Physical therapists
- Massage therapists
- Volunteers
- Dieticians
- Patients
- Families
- ETC
“Ready” is a tough word.
Palliative Care

- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- Affirms life and regards dying as a natural process
- Intends neither to hasten or postpone death
Palliative Care

• Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of care
• Offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible before death
People are Resilient.
Patients receiving Palliative Care Live longer
Learn not to make assumptions.
Palliative Care enhances quality of life and may also positively influence the course of illness.
Mentorship is very important.
“Palliative Care is good medical care for patients with serious medical illness.”

Diane Meier 2002
Sometimes no “medicine” is the best medicine.
Pillars of Palliative Care

• **Time** to handle intensive patient/family/physician meetings
• **Improved QOL**
• **Coordinated and well-communicated care**
• **Specialty level assistance**
• **Support** - for attendings and teams, discharge planning, transitions
• **Improved quality** leading to **lower costs**
Our patients shouldn’t need to find a way to fit into our environment. Our environment needs to fit our patients.