



Palliative Care

Empowering Patients to **LIVEWELL**

What is palliative care?

Palliative care focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a chronic or serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a team (specially trained doctors, nurses, social workers, volunteers and chaplains) who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a chronic or serious illness and can be provided along with curative treatment.

Why does our community need palliative care?

America's 65-and-over population is projected to nearly double over the next three decades, ballooning from 48 million to 88 million by 2050, according to a U.S. Census Bureau publication, *An Aging World: 2015*. This significant demographic shift represents a much larger population at risk for serious or complex illnesses.

By improving quality of care and minimizing hospitalizations and emergency room visits for the seriously and chronically ill, palliative care reduces healthcare burdens for patients.

Why is the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Foundation funding this program?

The PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Foundation recognizes the value of offering outpatient palliative care in Whatcom County—for individuals, families and the community at large.

Palliative care services are inadequately funded. Most components of palliative care, such as nursing care, social work support and spiritual care, are

not covered by insurance. The Foundation is committed to filling this healthcare gap by providing the initial five years of funding for outpatient palliative care in Whatcom County. In addition, PeaceHealth is committed to supporting the service beyond the five-year Foundation investment.

What is the Foundation specifically funding for outpatient palliative care?

The PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Foundation is funding operational start-up expenses to provide full, comprehensive, integrated program support and build program sustainability.

What's included in this palliative care model?

PeaceHealth's outpatient palliative care program employs a holistic, consultative and supportive model. Services include:

- Symptom management.
- Emotional support, including short-term counseling.
- Advance care planning.
- Spiritual support.
- Practical support, including transportation to appointments, respite care for caregivers and prescription pick-up.
- Referral to community resources.
- Care coordination.

What is the difference between palliative care and hospice?

Palliative care can begin at diagnosis or at any stage of illness. It can be incorporated alongside curative and life-prolonging treatments. It can be provided to any person with a chronic or serious illness, regardless of whether the illness is terminal or non-terminal.

Hospice care, on the other hand, is reserved only for terminally ill patients when treatment is no longer curative—typically with a life expectancy of less than six months. It seeks to improve quality of life in the remaining time a patient has left.

Palliative care can become a bridge to hospice care. It provides education and support in end-of-life decision making.

What is the difference between inpatient palliative care and outpatient palliative care?

The goals of inpatient palliative care and outpatient palliative care are the same; the only difference is the location. Patients need not be hospitalized to receive palliative care; they can receive care conveniently in their own homes, residential facilities or in a clinical setting.

When will outpatient palliative care begin and how many patients will it serve?

The program began providing care to patients in August 2018 and is expected to serve approximately 50 to 100 patients within the first year.



How can a person with serious or chronic illness access outpatient palliative care?

Patients may be referred to outpatient palliative care when they have been discharged from the hospital; are ineligible for hospice care; have graduated from hospice care; or have been diagnosed with stage 3 or 4 cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or congestive heart failure (CHF). New pathways will be created for providers and community members to refer to outpatient palliative care services in January 2019.

If I want to give a gift, may I make multi-year payments?

Yes. Multi-year commitments, made up to five years, are designed for flexibility and ease.

Are there naming opportunities for leadership gifts?

Generosity will be recognized on a unique donor wall located in our main hospital campus.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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