



# Palliative Care

Specialized supportive care for patients with serious illness.



**Palliative care helps patients deal with the often confusing, stressful and painful aspects of a serious illness.**

Key to patient comfort and quality of life, palliative care also helps patients understand their healthcare options, choose their best course of action given all available resources, and manage their symptoms. Palliative care patients find that hospitalization is not a long-term solution, yet their needs exceed the services of a primary care physician, nursing facility or the care provided by family members.

Palliative care patients need a keystone in their support — a central advocate — to help assure their physical, emotional and spiritual needs are met during this difficult journey.

**Keystone Medical Services is such an advocate, providing supportive care that includes:**

- Home visits and assistance connecting patients with community resources
- Advanced Care Planning
- Spiritual care and chaplain support
- Discussion of goals and assistance with hospice decisions

Palliative care is delivered on an inpatient and outpatient basis, in nursing and assisted living facilities, and through in-home visits wherever a patient calls home.





## *Isn't this the same as Hospice Care?*

**In a way, yes, in that patient comfort is a priority.** However, a patient under palliative care has not reached a stage where his or her disease is considered incurable and therefore may elect to continue curative treatments. In addition, palliative care is not dictated by strict definition protocol, as is hospice care. Specialists and primary care physicians often have a larger role in palliative care based on the patient's wishes.


**Hospice care is very specific:** end-of-life care for individuals who have been diagnosed with six or less months to live.



- Supportive care for anyone with a serious illness
- Available at any stage of a serious illness
- Can have it along with curative treatment



- Specialized care for terminally ill patients
- Available at the end stages of an incurable illness
- No longer receiving curative treatment
- Prognosis is usually 6 months or less



## *Managing Complex and Serious Symptoms*

The symptoms of serious illnesses and their treatments can render a patient exhausted, poorly nourished and living in constant pain. Keystone Medical Services staff are trained and experienced in managing these symptoms, helping to mitigate their impact on quality of life. Our physicians, nurses, and social workers provide:

- Assessment/management of difficult to manage symptoms related to advance illness
- Frequent patient follow-up of symptoms between patient, family, and provider
- Routine medication review

### **As it relates to:**

- Congestive Heart Failure • Alzheimer's
- Kidney Disease • Parkinson's
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Cancer • and other serious illness

## ***How To Make a Referral***

While a physician order is required to initiate palliative care services, any staff member in a medical office can call/fax/email a referral for an existing patient. A Keystone representative will follow up for a consultation.

For more information about palliative care services, call Keystone Medical Services and speak to our clinical support nurses. We will contact your provider to get a physician order and facilitate the start of your care.

***For additional information on palliative care for yourself, a family member or a patient, call 616.396.5444.***



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If you do not speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1.616.396.2972.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.616.396.2972.

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