

### **WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?**

Palliative care is an extra layer of relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness. It focuses on improving the quality of life for patients and their families. The palliative team communicates with your doctor and caregivers to match support with your medical, practical and spiritual needs.

### **WHO IS PALLIATIVE CARE FOR?**

Palliative care is meant to comfort individuals with severe and often terminal illnesses. Palliative care patients include individuals with:

- Cancer
- Heart failure
- Alzheimer's or dementia
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Parkinson's disease
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)

Palliative care helps to manage the symptoms related to these conditions and their standard courses of treatment.

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?**

Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life and promote the comfort of those diagnosed with a serious illness. Two of the many ways this is done is by managing the symptoms related to the illness and reducing any side effects of medications or treatments for that illness. Palliative care focuses on managing multiple symptoms, including:

- Complex pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Constipation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Sleep disorders
- Problems with balance and dizziness
- Anxiety
- Other symptoms that lead to distress

Spiritual and emotional support is also provided to the patient and their family to get them through a challenging, emotional time as comfortably as possible.

### **WHEN IS IT TIME FOR PALLIATIVE CARE?**

Generally, palliative care should be started as soon as a serious illness is diagnosed. The earlier palliative care begins, the more likely it is that the patient and their family will receive the help they need to manage their symptoms and cope with the diagnosis. Palliative care should continue throughout the course of a patient's illness, from the time they are diagnosed to end-of-life care.

### **HOW IS PALLIATIVE CARE DIFFERENT FROM HOSPICE?**

Palliative care is for people at any stage of their illness. The illness does not have to be life-threatening. Because of Medicare requirements, hospice is typically for patients with a life expectancy of six months or less.

### **WHO IS PART OF THE PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM?**

Care is provided by doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains and others who coordinate with a patient's medical team to ensure current needs are met and goals are set for care in the future.

### **WHO PAYS FOR PALLIATIVE CARE?**

Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans cover all or part of the palliative care consultation. If you have questions about coverage, call your insurance company or a local Compassus location.

### **HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH PALLIATIVE CARE?**

Contact Compassus at [compassus.com/synergy](https://compassus.com/synergy) or call us at **833-661-1394**.