



Palliative Care – What Everyone Needs to Know *Are you or someone you love suffering from a serious or chronic illness? Palliative care can help.*

Once informed, **92%** of people are highly likely to consider palliative care for themselves or their families.

What is palliative care?

Palliative (pronounced PAL-lee-uh-tiv) care is health care that focuses on improving quality of life and comfort for patients with serious or chronic illness. It focuses on relieving the pain and physical symptoms as well as the emotional stress, fear, frustration and spiritual concerns that major health problems can create for those with serious illness(es) and their families. Palliative care is provided by team of professionals, typically including doctors, nurses, social workers and spiritual counselors.

Palliative care can be received at the same time as other treatment and has been proven to help those with serious illness live longer, have a more rewarding life and to ease the stress on those who care for them. It is available for patients of all ages who are at any stage in their illness.

How do I know if I have a serious or chronic condition and need this care?

In California, 14 million people live with at least one chronic condition, and more than half have multiple chronic conditions. Examples of serious or chronic conditions include:

- Hypertension
- Arthritis
- Heart disease
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Respiratory disease or infection
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Parkinson's disease

Whether or not you have any of these diseases, it is very important to talk with your loved ones about your wishes for medical care, and theirs, before anyone becomes seriously ill. Talking and planning for future medical needs can be difficult, but it is the best way to make sure that your wishes will be respected. Many people write their wishes down for their family and their doctor in a document known as an Advance Directive.

While **82%** of Californians say it is important to have health care wishes in writing, only **23%** say they have done so.

I have a serious illness. How can palliative care help me?

Are your symptoms well managed and allowing you to experience the things in life that give you joy? If so, then simply know that should you need help, palliative care is another resource available to you.

However, if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Pain, nausea, or other physical symptoms?
- Anxiety, depression, or emotional distress?
- Loss of meaning, purpose or sense of worth?
- Difficulty communicating with your family or friends about what is happening to you and what is important?

Palliative care professionals have the skills to work hand-in-hand with your physician to make you more comfortable and improve your quality of life.

60% say making sure their family is not burdened by tough decisions about their care is “extremely important.” However, **56%** of Californians have not communicated their health care wishes to the loved one that they would want making decisions on their behalf.

I am caring for someone with a serious illness. What should I know about palliative care?

Caring for a friend or family member with a serious or chronic illness can be very stressful and exhausting. Palliative care can help keep your loved one comfortable, and connect you with the resources and support you need to protect your own health and well-being. It can also help to give you the skills you need to be more comfortable providing care.

Do you know your loved one’s choices for medical treatment? Do you feel comfortable having conversations about care planning and the future with your loved one as well other family members and friends? Do you know how to be an effective advocate for your loved one with the health care system? If your answer to any of these questions is “NO,” then palliative care can help.

Who provides palliative care?

Currently palliative care is largely available only to patients in hospitals but the number of outpatient palliative care services is growing. More community agencies are offering palliative care-related services and having their staff trained in the essential palliative care skills. To learn more about where to access palliative care services in San Diego, southern Riverside and southern Orange Counties, go to www.csupalliativecare.org/resources.

Isn't palliative care the same as hospice?

No. Hospice is very intensive palliative care suitable for the last 6 months of life. Palliative care is for anyone with a serious or chronic illness regardless of how long they have to live, and can be received right along with curative care.

What is the CSU Institute for Palliative Care at CSUSM, and how can it help?

The CSU Institute for Palliative Care at CSUSM educates and trains the people who can deliver palliative care here in our community, around the state and across the country. The Institute opened at Cal State San Marcos in 2012 with three goals: to teach today’s patients about palliative care so that they can ask for it when they need it, to teach today’s professionals how they can better provide it, and to help today’s nursing, social work and other students learn about palliative care so that they can help deliver it when they graduate. Visit our website at www.csupalliativecare.org for helpful online resources and to learn about the latest palliative care news and research as well as palliative care in our community.

Have more questions about palliative care?

Talk to your doctor, nurse and/or caregiver about palliative care and how it can help you and your loved ones. We also encourage you to talk to your family about the type of care that’s right for you. If you need help finding palliative care resources in your community, contact us at www.csupalliativecare.org/contact.

Initial funding for the CSU Institute for Palliative Care has been generously provided by the California HealthCare Foundation, the Archstone Foundation and philanthropist, Darlene Shiley.



Connect with us on Facebook, subscribe to our newsletter or find helpful resources at www.csupalliativecare.org

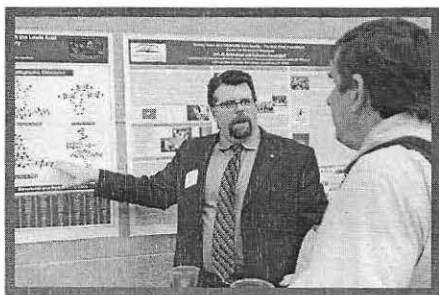
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