

# Considerations for Providing Palliative Care

## Palliative care may **improve**<sup>1-4</sup>:

- Symptom management
- Quality of life and survival rates
- Patient satisfaction and mood
- Recognition of caregiver needs through collaborative interaction with the health care team

## Palliative care may **reduce**<sup>1-4</sup>:

- Depression and symptom burden
- Total cost of care
- Resource utilization near end of life

## There are a number of challenges to the delivery of palliative care, including<sup>2,5-7</sup>:

### Timely provision of care

- Lack of awareness
- Provider reluctance to refer patient to a specialist
- Reluctance of patient and/or family to discuss palliative care
- Restrictive palliative care service program eligibility criteria

### Inconsistent implementation

- Varied definitions of palliative care
- Lacking awareness of standards or resources
- Lack of time and training of all health care professionals in palliative care

### Patient-provider communication

- Seriously ill patients not wanting to discuss end-of-life preferences
- Failure to address the prognosis and goals of care

## Palliative care standards and guidelines for quality<sup>8,9</sup>

When initiating palliative care for a patient, it is important to recognize and consider the standards to which care should be maintained.

### Clinical practice guidelines:

- National Consensus Project (NCP) Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care
- 2016 Commission on Cancer, Cancer Program Standards: Ensuring Patient-Centered Care
- 2017 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Clinical Practice Guideline Update

### Program standards and certifications:

- American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) Cancer Program Standards
- The Joint Commission (JCo) Advanced Certification for Palliative Care
- Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) Distinction in Palliative Care
- Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP) Palliative Care Certification Standards

### Quality reporting programs and incentives:

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Payment Program (QPP) and Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS)
- Anthem and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Quality Hospital Incentive Program (QHIP)
- Palliative Care Quality Collaborative (PCQC) and a national palliative care registry

### Professional certifications for providing palliative care services:

- American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Subspecialty Certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine
- American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Certificate of Added Qualification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine

## Key Takeaways

- Palliative care may offer patients and their support systems a range of benefits, including enhanced quality of life and resource optimization.
- Health care providers, patients, and caregivers should consider the challenges associated with palliative care implementation and administration.
- The provision of palliative care should be upheld to standards set by clinical practice guidelines, program and provider certifications, and quality reporting programs.

## References

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