

# Palliative Care Advisory Council

## 2014 Working Definition of Palliative Care

### National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care Clinical Practice Guidelines – Third Edition

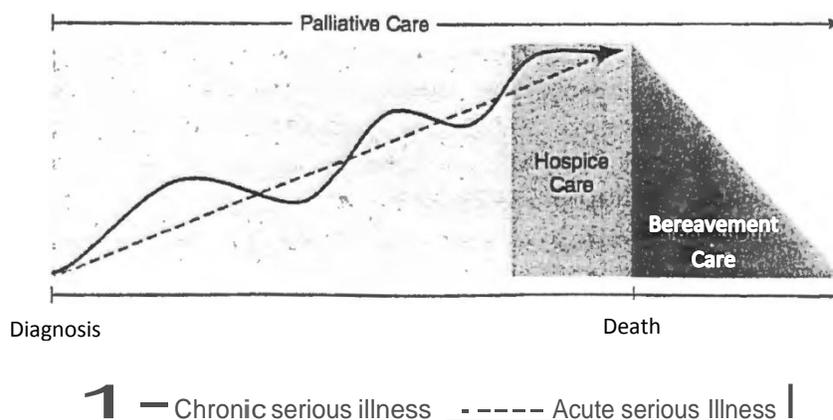
Palliative care means patient and family-centered care that optimizes quality of life by anticipating, preventing, and treating suffering. Palliative care throughout the continuum of illness involves addressing physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs and to facilitate patient autonomy, access to information, and choice.

The following features characterize palliative care philosophy and delivery:

- Care is provided and services are coordinated by an interdisciplinary team;
- patients, families, palliative and non-palliative health care providers collaborate and communicate about care needs;
- services are available concurrently with or independent of curative or life-prolonging care;
- patient and family hopes for peace and dignity are supported throughout the course of illness, during the dying process, and after death.

Palliative care is operationalized through effective management of pain and other distressing symptoms, while incorporating psychosocial and spiritual care with consideration of patient/family needs, preferences, values, beliefs, and culture. Evaluation and treatment should be comprehensive and patient-centered with a focus on the central role of the family unit in decision making. Palliative care affirms life by supporting the patient and family's goals for the future, including their hopes for cure or life-prolongation, as well as their hopes for peace and dignity throughout the course of illness, the dying process, and death.

FIGURE 1. Trajectories of Palliative Care



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### WHO Definition of Palliative Care (excerpts)

Palliative care:

- Affirms life and regards dying as a normal process;
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death;
- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness.