

Putnam County HomeCare & Hospice's Palliative Care can help anyone with a chronic life-altering illness

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When you or your loved one are diagnosed with a medical condition such as cancer, heart disease or Parkinson's, there is a lot to deal with, including multiple doctors' appointments, medical treatments, and pain management. Wouldn't it be great to have one dependable medical team in your corner to help in all areas of care?

That's where palliative care comes in. Palliative care includes a team of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, spiritual care and volunteers who work together to

provide relief from the symptoms and stress of your illness. “Palliative care is perfect for someone who has a life-altering illness, which means it changes their normal way of life,” said Kris Bellman, RN, Palliative Care and Hospice Supervisor at Putnam County HomeCare & Hospice in Ottawa, Ohio, a provider of comprehensive homecare, hospice and palliative care.

“Palliative care is valuable at any stage of an illness, but it’s better at the beginning of the condition so we get to know the patient,” said Bellman. Palliative care patients have been diagnosed with such conditions as cancer, congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney disease, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and many more. They may suffer from a wide variety of symptoms including pain, depression, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, and anxiety.

The palliative care team helps you to gain the strength to carry on with daily life. “Also, our social workers are available to provide community resources,” said Bellman. “Chaplains are available to pray with patients and provide spiritual guidance. Volunteers do a variety of different activities with the patients, such as playing cards, reading, taking a walk, or just sitting and visiting.”

According to the World Health Organization, only about 14% of people worldwide who need palliative care currently receive it. “That’s because many people still confuse palliative care with hospice care,” said Bellman. “Hospice patients are at the end of their life when the treatments for the illness stop. We then focus on quality of life rather than quantity of days.”

These are general indicators that someone would be a good candidate for palliative care:

- **Diagnosis of Life-Altering Illness**
- **Frequent Hospitalizations/ER visits**
- **Skin Integrity Issues (ulcers, bed sores)**
- **Recent infection requiring hospitalization**
- **Reoccurring Pneumonia**
- **Lack of Advance Directives**
- **Significant decline in functional status in prior 3 months**

- **Needs assistance with 2 or more Activities of Daily Living (Dressing, Personal Hygiene, Eating, Mobility and Toileting)**

In addition to care, the Palliative Care team also helps patients and their families with understanding and planning advanced directives, which are legal documents that spell out decisions about end-of-life care to your family, friends and health care team. That includes a do-not-resuscitate order, living will and durable power of attorney.

For more information, contact Putnam County HomeCare & Hospice, 575 Ottawa-Glandorf Road Suite #3 Ottawa, OH 45875. Call 419-523-4449 or visit <https://pchh.net/>.