

# Palliative Care vs. Hospice: What are the differences?

How can you help community members suffering from Alzheimer's?

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## Palliative Care: An Overview

Palliative care is an interdisciplinary specialized approach to providing care to individuals living with life altering, serious or complex, or even terminal illnesses. Palliative care focuses on providing symptom relief and optimizing one's quality of life; it entails a collaborative approach between physicians, nurses, and healthcare specialists including social workers, chaplains, and nutritionists whereby one's healthcare plan focuses on a patient's needs not their illness. In short, palliative care teaches patients and their families to help the patient function with what they have and are able to do. In addition to symptom relief and improving one's quality of life, "palliative care helps an individual (1) match treatment options to their goals and (2) collaborate with other doctors" (<https://getpalliativecare.org/whatis/>).

## Hospice: An Overview

Hospice care focuses on making individuals facing the last phases of an incurable disease as comfortable as possible while teaching them and their families to live as comfortably as possible, addressing improved quality of life. "The hospice philosophy accepts death as the final stage of life: it affirms life but does not try to hasten or postpone death. Hospice care treats the person and symptoms of the disease, rather than treating the disease itself" (<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/end-of-life-care/hospice-care/what-is-hospice-care.html>). Hospice care provides:

1. Palliative care
2. Home care and inpatient care
3. Spiritual care
4. Family meetings
5. Coordination of care
6. Respite care
7. Bereavement care

## How does Palliative Care differ from Hospice Care?

Where palliative care is offered at various stages of one's illness, hospice care is only offered at the end of a patient's life journey. Palliative care is provided in conjunction with active medical treatment, whereas hospice care is provided when there is no further active or curative treatment plan available to a patient. A palliative care team works collaboratively with a patient's team of medical professionals; however, a hospice care team is responsible for the majority of a patient's care.

## **Who benefits from Palliative Care?**

Palliative care is for anyone living with a serious and debilitating medical condition including:

1. Stroke
2. Cystic Fibrosis
3. Heart Failure
4. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
5. Parkinson's disease
6. Dementia or Alzheimer's
7. Cancer

## **Who benefits from Hospice Care?**

Patients with serious medical conditions facing the end of their life and their families benefit from hospice care. Hospice care helps seriously ill individuals who can no longer be helped with curative medicine live out the remainder of their lives and die with dignity; it also provides comfort for one's family and friends, helping them to accept the passing of their loved one.

## **RESOURCES**

- A. <https://getpalliativecare.org/whatis/>
- B. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/end-of-life-care/hospice-care/what-is-hospice-care.html>
- C. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-are-palliative-care-and-hospice-care>