

Palliative Care



What is Palliative Care?

Palliative Care uses comfort care with a focus on relieving suffering and controlling symptoms so that you can carry out day-to-day activities, and continue to do what is most important to you – like visiting grandchildren in another state. Palliative care aims to improve your quality of life – in your mind, body and spirit.

Palliative Care can be combined with treatment that is aimed at curing or controlling your illness. It can be started at the time of your diagnosis, and may be provided throughout the course of the illness.

Am I eligible for Palliative Care?

Since **Palliative Care** is part of the VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package, all *enrolled Veterans* are eligible **IF they meet the clinical need for the service**.

Copays may be charged for Palliative Care.

Find out more by visiting the Paying for Long Term Care section at www.va.gov/Geriatrics.

What services can I get?

Palliative Care provides services that relieve suffering and help control symptoms in a way that respects your personal, cultural, and religious beliefs and practices.

While receiving Palliative Care you can also receive treatment to cure or control your illness.

How do I decide if it is right for me?

You can use a **Shared Decision Making Worksheet** to help you figure out what long term care services or settings may best meet your needs now or in the future.

There's also a **Caregiver Self-Assessment**. It can help your caregiver identify their own needs and decide how much support they can offer to you. Having this information from your caregiver, along with the involvement of your care team and social worker, will help you reach good long term care decisions.

Ask your social worker for these Worksheets or download copies from the **Shared Decision Making** section at www.va.gov/Geriatrics.

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Your physician or other primary care provider can answer questions about your medical needs. Some important questions to talk about with your social worker and family include:

- How much assistance do I need for my activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and getting dressed)?
- What are my caregiver's needs?
- How much independence and privacy do I want?
- What sort of social interactions are important to me?
- How much can I afford to pay for care each month?

If Palliative Care seems right for you, talk with your primary care provider or Palliative Care Consult Team member. You can also talk with your VA social worker about Palliative Care.



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