

# 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. 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.

## What services can I get?

Palliative Care is provided by an interdisciplinary team consisting of a medical provider, social worker, nurse, chaplain, mental health

provider and perhaps others. The team's focus is on identifying, respecting and providing help in achieving the Veteran's goals of care, with support and care to address: physical symptoms, family coping, emotional or spiritual distress, and access to needed resources.

## How do I decide if it is right for me?

You can use a [Veteran Decision Aid for Care at Home or in the Community Making](#) to help you figure out what home care services or long term care services 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 short-term and long-term care decisions.

Ask your social worker for these resources or download copies from the [Making Decisions and Advance Care Planning](#) section at [www.va.gov/Geriatics](http://www.va.gov/Geriatics).

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



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