



The Evidence for High-Quality Palliative Care

Individuals who have serious illness or multiple chronic conditions frequently experience functional decline over time due to disease progression. All too often, the care these patients receive is fragmented and uncoordinated and can include burdensome and costly interventions that are inconsistent with their values and preferences. They are frequently admitted to the hospital because of the lack of home- and community-based services. Many of these patients and their family caregivers could benefit from palliative care and support services that can better align treatments with their individual preferences and allow more care to be delivered where they live.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that high-quality palliative care services can provide significant benefits for patients, caregivers, and payers, including:

- Reducing pain and suffering patients experience due to their illnesses;^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}
- Reducing stresses and physical burdens on caregivers that can create or worsen their health problems;^{8,9}
- Increasing caregiver satisfaction;¹⁰
- Reducing the number of times patients visit emergency departments due to burdensome symptoms or exacerbations of their health conditions;^{11,12,13,14,15}
- Reducing unnecessary office visits to specialists for routine follow-up care;¹⁶
- Reducing unnecessary and duplicative laboratory testing and imaging services;¹⁷
- Reducing the use of emergency transportation for ED visits and hospital admissions;¹⁸
- Reducing the use of low-value treatment services and medical technologies that do not extend the patient's life and may worsen the patient's quality of life;^{19,20}
- Reducing the number of hospital admissions for exacerbations or complications of the patient's health conditions;^{21,22,23,24,25}
- Reducing the use of intensive care beds during hospital stays;^{26,27}
- Avoiding the costs of maintaining medical devices that do not support or improve the patient's quality of life;²⁸ and
- Reducing the use of expensive post-acute care services, such as skilled nursing facilities, to address post-acute care needs that can be addressed at lower cost.²⁹

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