

## **TITLE: Introduction to Palliative Care**

### **Topic: 1**

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of; early identification, impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. Palliative care:

- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- affirms life and regards dying as a normal process
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death
- integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care
- offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death
- offers a support system to help the family cope during the patients illness and in their own bereavement
- uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated
- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness
- is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications

World Health Organization [internet]. [cited 2017 Jan.24] <http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/>

Palliative care is best delivered by:

- a multidisciplinary team approach
- addressing the needs of the individual including: physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and any other needs identified by the person
- focusing on individual/family goals of care

The guiding principles outlined by the Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care Association are:

- Equitable and timely service provision
- High quality and comprehensive care
- Multidisciplinary approach that is adequately funded

Ferris FD, Balfour HM, Bowen K, Farley J, Hardwick M, Lamontagne C, et al. A Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care: Based on National Principles and Norms of Practice. Ottawa, ON, Canada: 2002.