

Today, nearly 60% of all hospitals with more than 50 beds have palliative care programs. Ventura County Medical Center, long having led the way with innovative services and programs, is pleased to provide this service to the community. When facing a serious illness, you need to understand your condition and choices for care. Let the Ventura County Medical Center's Palliative Care team help you achieve the best quality of life.

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**VENTURA COUNTY  
HEALTH CARE AGENCY**

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VENTURA COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

# *Palliative Care*

CONSULTATION SERVICES



*Focused on preventing, treating and relieving the suffering of serious illness, for patients and their families, in a facility with a reputation for excellence.*

**DIRECTORS:**  
LESLIE LYNN-PAWSON, MD  
JAMES HELMER, MD



**VENTURA COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER**

# What you need to know about palliative care

## WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is a medical specialty dedicated to helping patients and their loved ones cope with serious illness. Palliative comes from the Latin word “Palliate,” which means to ease. The primary focus of palliative care is to prevent and ease suffering and improve the quality of life.

Palliative care does not replace the primary treatment that a patient receives, it complements it. Palliative care pays special attention to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families to assure comfort, dignity and a better quality of life.

## HOW IS PALLIATIVE CARE DIFFERENT FROM HOSPICE?

Palliative care is available at any time during a person’s illness, even from the time of diagnosis. Hospice focuses on terminally ill people who no longer seek treatments to cure their illness.

A patient does not have to be in hospice or at the end of life to receive palliative care. People in hospice always receive palliative care, but hospice focuses on a person’s final months of life.

## HOW WILL VENTURA COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER’S PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM HELP?

VCMC’s Palliative Care team is specially trained to treat the whole person, meeting the patient’s medical, emotional, spiritual and social needs. Some of the attention a patient can expect includes:



- Team approach to care provided by doctors, nurses, social worker, dietitian, psychologist, pharmacist and clergy
- Provide care along with the patient’s physicians and nurses while hospitalized
- Respect for each patient’s values and personal choices
- Coordination of care and treatment among healthcare providers at all stages of illness
- Assistance relieving pain and symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, depression, anxiety, sleeplessness and shortness of breath
- Emotional and spiritual support for the patient and the patient’s family
- Identify services to support patients and families after leaving our hospital

## HOW CAN THE PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM BE CONTACTED?

Experts from the Ventura County Medical Center’s Palliative Care Consultation Services are available through a consult from the attending or primary physician. Every patient referred to the Palliative Care Program is individually evaluated. A specific plan is created and implemented with the patient and family as the unit of care.

A patient and/or family member can ask their doctor to contact the Palliative Care Service:

Ventura County Medical Center  
Palliative Care Consult Service  
Referral number: (805) 652-6093

## WHO MAKES UP THE VCMC PALLIATIVE CARE CONSULT SERVICE TEAM?

We are an interdisciplinary team consisting of:



- Palliative Care Physicians
- Palliative Care Nurses
- Social Workers
- Clergy
- Dietitian
- Psychologist
- Pharmacist