Palliative care is an approach to care that strives to improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Pediatric palliative care focuses on the prevention and relief of suffering through early identification, attentive assessment, and compassionate treatment of pain and other distressing symptoms. The palliative care team partners with patients, families, and the primary medical team to develop a collaborative plan of care to help meet the goals and needs of each child and family.

The palliative care team supports children and families by:

- Considering the patient and family as the center of the unit of care
- Striving to achieve optimal quality of life for patients
- Fostering effective communication between the patient, family, members of the primary health team, and subspecialists
- Helping patients and families to understand prognosis in an honest, compassionate way
- Providing a safe/neutral space for patients and families to weigh the risks/benefits of medical interventions and to consider the side effects of various treatments
- Striving to relieve pain and suffering, whether physical, emotional, or psychosocial
- Recognizing and treating distressing symptoms early
- Recommending and utilizing integrative and alternative therapies such as medical massage, art therapy guided imagery, breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, child life, pet therapy, bibliotherapy, acupressure, aromatherapy and energy field interventionsto help improve pain and manage symptoms
- Supporting siblings and extended relatives (such as grandparents) and even classmates/peers of a child facing a complex illness
- Exploring each patient and family's values, hopes, and wishes to include enabling advanced care planning
- Determining discharge options and fostering effective, supportive transitions between health care settings
- Realizing that even though medicine may not be able to "fix" all problems or "cure" all complexities, healing and love remain

Palliative care aims to enhance the quality of life for each child in a developmentally appropriate way and within the context of each family's values.
Pediatric Palliative Care Faculty and Staff

Andrew Macfadyen, MD
Hand in Hand Medical Director
PICU Medical Director

Meaghan Shaw Weaver MD, MPH
Palliative Care Physician

Katie Vail, MSN, APRN, CPNP
Nurse Practitioner

Sue Bace, LICSW, ACHPC-SW
Program Coordinator/Clinical Social Worker

Sheila Mee, DMin, CHTP
Healing Touch Practitioner

Denice Schroeder BSN, RN, CHPPN
Case Manager RN

Dale Wretchford, BCC, CMP MHA
Chaplain
Pastoral and Spiritual Care

Nikki Walker, MS, CCLS
Child Life Specialist

Pediatric Palliative Care Patient Care

The pediatric palliative care team considers it a privilege to care for each child and family.
Children’s Hospital & Medical Center
8200 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68114

The Nebraska Medical Center
982165 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-2165

Phone: 402-955-5428
Email: Handinhand@childrensomaha.org

Pediatric Palliative Care Team

5 Things to Know about Palliative Care for Children and Adolescents

1. Palliative care offers support to the entire family.
When a child is seriously ill, each person in the family is affected differently. Palliative care is a key part of care for children living with a serious illness but it is also an important source of support for their families. In addition to relieving pain and other symptoms for the child, it can ease the stress on parents, siblings, grandparents, and others during a difficult time.

2. Palliative care is a partnership.
Together with health care providers, palliative care professionals work with families to develop a care plan that is right for each child and family. The interdisciplinary team spends as much time as it takes to fully understand and discuss the child’s condition, care preferences, and family needs. The palliative care team at Children’s Hospital & Medical Center includes physicians, a nurse practitioner, a social worker, a case manager, a child life specialist, a Healing Touch practitioner, and a chaplain.

3. Palliative care is flexible.
Palliative care can help children, from newborns to young adults - at any stage of a serious illness-and their families. Palliative care works alongside the
child's primary medical care. Families can begin getting care as soon as they learn about the illness (to include in the fetal medicine clinic), and it is never too early to start. Care can be provided in a hospital, clinic, or at home. Palliative care teams know what services are available in a given community and help families identify supports that suit their unique needs and preferences.

4. Palliative care is not the same as hospice care.
Although palliative care providers are trained in hospice work and certified for hospice care, a child does not need to be in hospice to get palliative care. Hospice care focuses on a person's final months of life, but palliative care is available at any time during a serious illness and regardless of prognosis. Some children receive palliative care for many years. Palliative care can be provided at the same time as curative treatments for an illness.

5. Palliative care is effective.
According to studies of patients, people who receive palliative care report that it helps with symptom management, emotional support, and communication between providers and families. Other studies have shown that palliative care meets the emotional, developmental, and spiritual needs of patients, and helps them get the kinds of care they want. Interestingly patients who receive palliative care in randomized control trials experience not only improved quality of life but also longer quantity of life!

Resources about Pediatric Palliative Care

Conversations matter Start one about palliative care today.

For more information about palliative care for children, visit NINR's Palliative Care: Conversations Matter® campaign at http://www.ninr.nih.gov/conversationsmatter

Learn more about pediatric palliative care through the following resources:

Read this overview of palliative care: https://getpalliativecare.org/whatis/pediatric/


Watch an informational video on pediatric palliative care is available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEx-n9sDFd8

Favorite the Children's Hospital & Medical Center Omaha Hand in Hand Website: http://www.childrensomaha.org/main/hand-in-handpalliative-care.aspx

Bibliotherapy and Advanced Care Planning

Finding suitable reading materials to introduce the topics of illness, death, and grief to children can be challenging. The palliative care team maintains a large selection of age-appropriate, award-winning children's literature focused on the topic of illness, death, dying, and bereavement relevant to self, peers, or family members. Storybooks and workbooks have the potential to engage children and adolescents in meaningful, creative, and developmentally-appropriate
ways. Consider communicating with the palliative care team for storybook or picture book recommendations (categorized by age, ethnicity, and art). The team also has validated, age-appropriate advanced care planning tools such as Five Wishes, My Wishes, and Voicing my Choices available for patients and care teams.

University of Nebraska College of Medicine, 982165 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-2165

SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient’s email}.  
Forward this email | Update Profile | About our service provider  
Sent by gbeck@unmc.edu in collaboration with

Try it free today