



# Palliative Care: Preventing Avoidable Hospitalizations

Patty Austin, RN  
Quality Improvement Specialist



Quality  
Insights

QIN-QIO

Quality Innovation Network -  
Quality Improvement Organizations

CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES  
iQUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP

# What Is in a Name?

- Palliative
- Hospice

# What is Hospice ?

- Definition
  - Care for residents who have a limited life expectancy
  - Require comprehensive biomedical, psychosocial, and spiritual support as they enter the terminal stage of an illness or condition



# What is Palliative Care?

- Definition
  - A multidisciplinary approach to specialized medical care that focuses on providing residents with relief from the symptoms, pain, physical stress, and mental stress of a serious illness — whatever the diagnosis



# Bridging the Gap



# Goals of Care



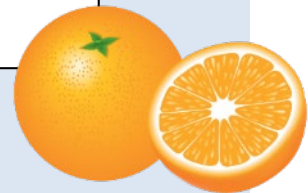
- Begin the discussion
- Gather information
- Educate the resident and the family
- Be supportive
- Make a plan



# Video: Palliative Care and Oranges



Palliative Care and Oranges. <https://youtu.be/8pRt1Q0Qljg>



# Resource: Palliative Care and Oranges

## Palliative Care and Oranges: A Story About Managing Illness

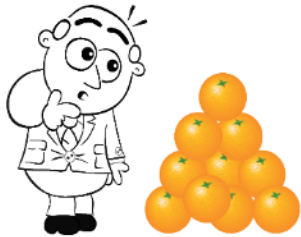
What if having congestive heart failure was like having one orange? It's something you have to carry around with you but since it's just one thing, you can probably manage it.

Let's say you added another orange. What if you had diabetes in addition to your congestive heart failure? Now you've got two oranges to carry.

With one orange in each hand, you might feel like you're starting to reach a limit and could be overwhelmed if another orange falls into your lap.

It's not uncommon for people to deal with multiple health issues. This can make the burden of carrying all of these concerns very difficult.

Palliative care can help. Think of it as a basket that will carry all of those oranges.



### What is palliative care?

#### Palliative care:

- Is a form of specialized medical care for people with serious, chronic or life-threatening illness
- Is NOT the same as hospice care
- Is something people move in and out of as an illness worsens or improves
- Can help provide relief from the symptoms and stress of your illness by improving quality of life for both you and your family
- Can help you better understand your illness and treatment options, and clarify the goals you want to meet while you're on your healthcare journey
- Can help you cope and prepare for what to expect if your illness progresses

Palliative care can help you manage your health burdens. Ask your doctor about palliative care today.

#### Check out Quality Insights' video!

Watch this message come to life. Visit [youtu.be/8pRt1QQQlJg](https://youtu.be/8pRt1QQQlJg) to view *Palliative Care and Oranges: A Story About Managing Illness*. This short video will introduce you to Sam, who loves oranges and shows you how palliative care can help you manage your health.

#### Learn more about palliative care!

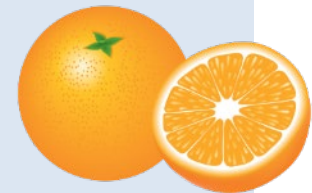
Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Online: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



This material was prepared by Quality Insights, a Quality Improvement Network Quality Improvement Organization, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS. Publication number 12S1W-QI-MH10723-CC





# Barriers to Communication

- Fear of mortality
- Lack of experience
- Avoidance of emotion
- Insensitivity
- Sense of guilt
- Desire to maintain hope



# Language Used at the End of Life

- Discontinuation
- Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)
- Withdrawing/withholding



# Scenario

- 78 year-old man admitted after congestive heart failure (CHF) exacerbation
- CHF newly diagnosed
- Refused potentially life-extending treatments (ICD)
- Lives alone, children close by
- Delirium during hospital stay; no living will
- Family hesitant to make decisions; Full Code requested
- Palliative care consult recommended
- Code status changed, treatment changes
- Discharge to home with hospice

# Questions?

---

# Contact

---

Patty Austin, RN

- Quality Improvement Specialist
- [paustin@qualityinsights.org](mailto:paustin@qualityinsights.org)

Find us online:

[qualityinsights.org/qin](http://qualityinsights.org/qin)



Quality  
Insights

QIN-QIO

Quality Innovation Network -  
Quality Improvement Organizations  
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES  
iQUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP



# Scenario

- 64-year-old woman admitted after chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbation, with no family nearby
- O2 needs increased from 2 liters to 4 liters in hospital
- Multiple opioid pain medications
- Refusing therapy due to pain, shortness of breath, and nervousness
- Palliative care consult
- New interventions: Breathing techniques able to reduce O2 needs
- Medication changes and support result in symptom improvement
- Visit from dog
- Therapy accepted and pain reduced