



Cancer Wellness – A Focus on The Importance of Supportive Care



MaryAnn Fragola, DNP, ANPc, ACHPN
Chief of Wellness Services
New York Cancer & Blood Specialists



Rose Gerber, MS
Director of Patient Advocacy & Education
Community Oncology Alliance

SAVE THE DATE | May 8, 2024

COA Capitol Hill Day Washington, D.C.

Patients and cancer survivors*
(treated in a community oncology
practice) are invited to join us on
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**Targeted states and specific criteria will
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Chief of Wellness Services

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Nurse

Board-Certified



NEW YORK

CANCER & BLOOD

SPECIALISTS

Introduction and Background

Started Palliative and Supportive Care Program at NYCBS in 2021-Support from Dr. Jeffrey Vacirca-shared in my vision

Assessed need for supportive care in community oncology setting

Whole person care focused on incorporating all disciplines including physical, psychosocial, and spiritual components

Treatment is patient specific reflecting patient needs and enhances care

Multidisciplinary team approach to care, extra layer of support

Understanding that goals of care change as the trajectory changes

What is Palliative and Supportive Care?

WHO defines palliative care as:

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 of and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual (WHO 2002, p 83)”

Common Misconceptions

- Patients can only receive palliative care if they have an end-stage or terminal disease
- I'm not ready for palliative care yet
- Palliative care patients cannot receive curative care
- Palliative care is only for hospitalized patients
- Palliative care means my doctors have given up on me
- It is an end-of-life service, like a hospice

- ▶ Palliative care is focused on managing symptoms and providing emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual support to individuals with chronic illnesses
- ▶ Palliative and supportive care should be viewed as a supportive element of care for patients with chronic illnesses at all stages of their disease.
- ▶ Preventing and managing symptoms while optimizing the quality of life throughout the disease process are among the many goals of palliative medicine.
- ▶ Palliative care can be provided alongside therapies intended to cure, control, or support the person's disease and can be provided to patients who still have many years to live



Palliative Care is Supportive Care

- Control Physical Symptoms and side effects such as: Pain, shortness of breath, nausea, anxiety, depression, insomnia, lack of appetite and bowel issues
- Manage emotional issues that coincide with a cancer diagnosis
- Caregiver Support
- Assessing Spiritual concerns
- Addressing goals of care, Advanced Care Planning and associated forms

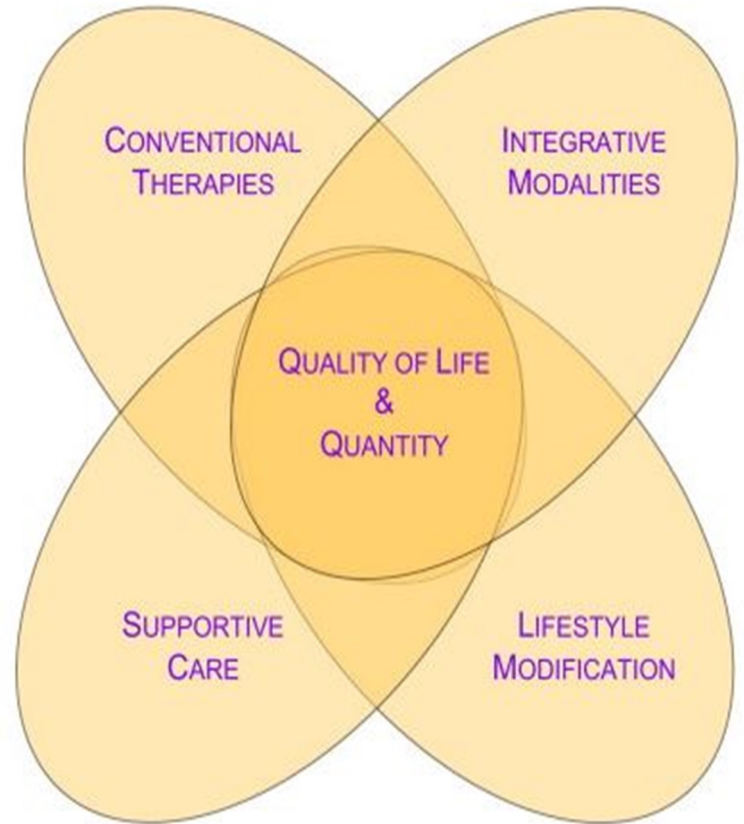
What is Cancer Wellness

“Wellness” is defined as: “the optimal state of health of individuals and groups.”

Important to fulfill physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and economic needs.

Cancer is considered a chronic disease. Over the past two decades, people are living longer following a cancer diagnosis, often with long-term side effects.

To manage the long-term impact of a cancer diagnosis and its treatment, it is important to focus on surveillance and management of cancer but also support the overall wellness of these patients.



Key Points

- Wellness considers your lifestyle as a whole, encompassing your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health as part of your treatment plan
- When we talk about patients with cancer we tend not to consider “wellness” but even with a chronic illness you can “live well”.
- When we speak about cancer wellness it is about living your best life and encouraging what may lead to improved quality of life
- Nourishing the body with proper nutrition and nutritional management tailored to your specific needs
- Strengthening the body with Physical therapy- participating in PT as part of your treatment plan can restore physical function. Light to moderate exercise (walking, biking, swimming) for about 30 minutes every—or almost every—day can reduce anxiety and depression, improve mood and boost self-esteem
- Social work and mental health services to improve mental health, meditation, acupuncture and prayer, as well as , developing effective mind-body strategies

Importance of Cancer Wellness as a Focus on Supportive Care

Improving a person's overall “wellness” or quality of life is essential to patient care

Enhances overall care -Better symptom management leads to improved compliance to treatment regimes including chemo, radiation, etc. leading to better outcomes

Better rapport and open communication

Inclusion of caregivers and family-caregivers are involved in direct care, decision-making, goal-setting, and advance care planning.

Alleviation of fears

Advanced care discussions- less overall suffering

A cancer diagnosis does not define a person, it is just a part of your story

Studies reveal that patients that are receiving palliative care have greater outcomes and extension of life

Develop a Wellness Plan

- Developing a wellness plan that includes many ways you can take care of your physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.
- Speak to your provider-be open and honest-overall more aware of wellness as part of cancer care
- Goals are different for each individual
- Regular physical exercise-just being physically active
- Eating a balanced diet
- Practice sleep hygiene
- Limit or avoid alcohol, avoid smoking
- Protect your skin
- Practice mindfulness

Start slow and make attainable goals- be realistic

Develop a survivorship plan as well for routine screening and overall health

“Meeting the Patient Where They Are”

Sounds unconventional but everyone is in a different place no matter their disease state.

Cancer wellness, supportive and palliative care go along side curative and other treatments.

Advocacy for palliative/supportive/wellness care may look different but it is still advocacy. It may be conversations about what is important to them at that moment and can change very easily

Side effects have a huge impact on quality of life and if left with debilitating issues they feel worse than with there original diagnosis- it took me a while to realize this.

Someone with cancer may not be ready to discuss the future or advance care planning but when you validate and “meet them where they are” you are able to build trust and take the time to transition them where they need to be- you will get there

A Moment about Advocacy

Adopt policies and standards that include wellness and supportive care in health laws, national health programs, and national health budgets

Ensure that insurance plans integrate palliative care and wellness as an essential component of their programs

Ensure access to essential therapies for pain relief and palliative care

Make certain that palliative care is part of all health services (from community health-based programs to hospitals), that everyone is assessed, and that all staff can provide basic palliative care with specialist teams available for referral and consultation

Ensure access to palliative care for vulnerable groups, considering all social determinants of health

Collaborate with universities, academia, and teaching hospitals to include palliative care research as well as palliative care training as an integral component of ongoing education

THANK YOU

MaryAnn Fragola
Chief of Wellness Services
(631) 751-3000
mfragola@nycancer.com

References

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2. World Health Organization
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Thank You!

MaryAnn Fragola

Don't miss our next Advocacy Chat on
Wednesday, March 13 at 12:00 pm ET

Changing the Way Men go Through Cancer



Trevor Maxwell
Founder and CEO
Man Up to Cancer