Palliative Care Unit

Palliative Care is designed to improve the quality of life for patients facing serious or life-limiting illness. The focus of care shifts from curing disease to:

- Symptom control.
- Pain and stress relief.
- Comfort measures.
- Physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

The Palliative Care unit is on the 16th floor of Prentice Woman’s Hospital. The Palliative Care team assumes the lead role in caring for you. Your primary care physician or specialist (e.g., oncologist or cardiologist) will be regularly informed about your care. Care is provided by a team which includes:

- Nurses.
- Physicians.
- Social workers.
- Chaplains.
- Patient care technicians.
- Volunteers.

You and your loved ones are also very important part of the team. The team works closely with you and your loved ones to devise a plan of care for pain and symptom relief and psychosocial and spiritual support.

The Palliative Care unit looks very much like other units in the hospital. But you will notice that:

- It is calmer and quieter than the medical unit. The rooms are large so most families have room to gather. There is a built-in couch in each of the rooms which can convert to a bed. This will allow a loved one to spend the night. Accommodations for other family can be arranged by staff depending on availability.
We will assess any difficulty with pain, breathing, nausea and other symptoms so we can provide comfort measures for you if these symptoms are bothering you.

Blood pressure, oxygen levels in the blood, heart rate checks, lab tests, suctioning and use of cardiac monitors are limited because our focus now is keeping you comfortable.

We will review all of your treatments to see the benefits of each. Medicines that are no longer helping you or providing symptom relief will be stopped.

If you are enrolled in hospice, the Palliative Care unit staff works closely with the Hospice staff. Together our goal is manage your symptoms and establish a plan to allow for you to transition back to home or a facility closer to home for ongoing care.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the 3rd floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the 1st floor of the Prentice Women’s Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.