

The following messages and supporting points are to be used with external audiences, such as the public and the press. NOTE: The right messaging is extremely important at this time. We should focus on how we can help our patient population through our expertise—symptom management and skilled communication. This is our domain. Our involvement adds resources and expertise to support the care of people with serious illness, including COVID-19.

Inquiries from reporters, press office, bloggers, publicists, etc. regarding triage policy, death, dying, DNR, and ventilators should always be referred to critical care, emergency medicine, and/or ethics. The media often seeks out dramatic stories, and we do not want to reinforce misconceptions.

Key Message

The skills that palliative care clinicians use at the bedside—communication, listening to what people are feeling, clear recommendations for treatment, support for priority-setting, and a calm presence—are the same skills that all clinicians need to navigate this crisis.

Talking Points

- Palliative care focuses on improving quality of life for people living with a serious illness, including COVID-19.
- Palliative care specialists' expertise in symptom management and skilled communication is essential to the care of people with COVID-19, including the majority of patients who will survive the disease.
- The palliative care patient population—those living with serious illness—are in the highest risk group for COVID-19, and they and their loved ones are not only particularly vulnerable but also particularly stressed by the current situation.
- Palliative care teams are a scarce resource, however, so it is essential that we deploy our expertise in a manner that reaches the largest numbers of patients in need—including the millions who will survive.
- We therefore urge all palliative care teams to lead their colleagues so that they can rapidly enhance and deploy best practices in communication and symptom management.

Definition of Palliative Care

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of the illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Resources: <https://www.capc.org/toolkits/covid-19-response-resources/>