Trinity Health is one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation, serving diverse communities that include more than 30 million people across 22 states. We are building a People-Centered Health System to put the people we serve at the center of every behavior, action and decision. This brings to life our commitment to be a compassionate, transforming and healing presence in our communities. We advocate for public policies that support better health, better care and lower costs to ensure affordable, high quality, people-centered care for all.

Palliative Care is People-Centered Care

- Palliative care is a medical specialty that offers people-centered care to patients with serious illness that focuses on quality of life, ensuring that patients living with chronic illness have relief from pain, symptoms and stress; and that their caregivers/families also receive needed support.
- Today, more than ever, people are living for many years—even decades—with serious chronic diseases.
- Provided by interdisciplinary teams that address the medical, psychological, spiritual and social needs of patients, palliative care is offered in partnership with the patient’s regular care team of clinicians and is concurrent with disease treatments.

Palliative care supports people with serious illness successfully to live with life-limiting conditions; for example, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or congestive heart failure. It is available to patients of any age no matter what the diagnosis or prognosis, and can be delivered alongside curative treatments.

Trinity Health Palliative Care Program Highlights

- Up from 20 percent in 2013, today 95 percent of Trinity Health hospitals offer a Palliative Care Program.
- 91 percent of palliative care patients report being highly satisfied.
- From FY2014 – FY2016, Trinity Health Palliative Care programs experienced a total of $9,803,752 of internal validated savings, more than 157 percent in projected cost savings.
- Educational initiative from The Center To Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) resulted in more than 18,000 on-line palliative care course completions.
- $1.6M grant funding for Community Palliative Care.

Palliative care does not provide a cure, but offers greater opportunities for patients to live well, supports those who would benefit from further education in their own self-care, while offering an additional team of expert medical professionals to enhance their quality of life. As a result, patients often spend fewer days in intensive care and face fewer trips to the emergency department and hospital readmissions.

Sometimes confused with hospice care, the goals of palliative treatment are designed to benefit those with complex chronic conditions who expect to live with their illness. A part of the palliative care continuum, hospice care is designed to serve those patients entering the terminal or end stage of an illness.

Honoring Veterans

A surviving family member shared, my veteran father wore his 'Forever Free' pin every day. Unfortunately, it was lost in the last days of his life, but the Mount Carmel Hospice staff gave us another so that we could pin it to his lapel for his funeral visitation. It was so important to him.

Forever Free is a veteran-centric hospice care program offered by Mount Carmel Health System, Columbus, Ohio, which provides special care and tributes (vet-to-vet recognition days, pinning ceremonies, honor flights) to honor vets and their families at the end of life. The Forever Free program has been awarded Four Star Ranking, the highest ranking offered by the We Honor Veterans organization.

Palliative Care: Leadership & Commitment

Trinity Health has been dedicated to advancing the benefits of palliative care across the country for nearly a decade. This work
Sharing Our Palliative Care Story

brings to life the call of Pope Francis I that palliative care be a hallmark of Catholic health care. Trinity Health also recognizes palliative care as a national priority, and in February 2017, endorsed a Pew Charitable Trust letter to the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs.

In 2013, Trinity Health committed to a system-wide palliative care initiative increasing the access of palliative care services; addressing better health, better care and lower costs; and meeting national quality standards and evidence-based research.

A standard electronic health record, established by Trinity Health, delivers consultation orders within three days or less from admission; with 100 percent of the patients being seen within 24 hours of an ordered consultation. Improved outcomes include: a 90 percent improvement in shortness of breath treatment; an 80 percent improvement in pain assessment. Finally, 70 percent of patients receive Advanced Care Planning completion at time of consultation.

Trinity Health is expanding the delivery of palliative care that is supported through grants totally $1.6 million for community palliative care, and a Medicare Care Choices Grant Award to support this expansion.

The Patient Quality of Life Coalition (#PQLC), of which Trinity Health is a member, was formed to advance the interests of patients and families facing serious illness, including survivors. The coalition has developed a consensus-based agenda aimed at promoting public policy that will improve and expand access to high-quality palliative care.

Champions for the Chronically Ill: Regional Health Ministries in Action

Trinity Health Ministries across the country have been leading the way in providing palliative care programs for nearly 20 years, including being the first in many states to be certified Palliative Care Programs by the Joint Commission for the Advancement of Palliative Care. Ministry highlights, include:

- **Mercy Health System, Pa.** – Launching an inpatient program in all three of its hospitals in 2015, Mercy Health System added a medical director in 2017, and also provides an in-home program through Mercy Choices. With a palliative medicine rotation for internal medicine residents being offered beginning in 2017, Mercy Health System is committed to ensuring palliative care services are available across the care continuum.

- **Holy Cross Health, Silver Spring, Md.** – Holy Cross Health Palliative Care provides services for hospitals in Silver Spring and Germantown, Md. Working with skilled nursing facilities and ambulatory clinics to improve quality of care and coordination, Holy Cross is also a selected participant in the Maryland Health Care Commission’s (MHCC) Hospital Palliative Care Pilot program, and an MHCC Advisory Group dedicated to developing core data measures and reporting standards.

- **Mount Carmel Health System, Columbus, Ohio.** – Mount Carmel Health System is one of eight designated Palliative Care Leadership Centers in the United States, and has helped nearly 160 teams learn about best practices in palliative care programs. Mount Carmel has received a Four Star Ranking from the “We Honor Veterans” organization.

- **St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne, Pa.** – Inpatient palliative care services have been offered since 2005, with the addition of a dedicated medical director in 2015. St. Mary participates in the Bucks County Health Improvement Partnership Advance Care Planning Task Force and was pivotal in the formation of the Community Palliative Care Steering committee, a collaborative effort designed to provide continuity of care for patients transitioning through care settings.

- **St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, Pontiac, Mich.** – Making palliative care part of the culture at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland has been an ongoing commitment since the hospital launched Mercy Supportive Care in 2000. The program received the prestigious American Hospital Association Circle of Life Award in 2006. In 2012, the program was certified by the Joint Commission for Advanced Palliative Care, the fourth program accredited nationally, and the first in Michigan.

- **Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, Boise, Idaho.** – Certified Palliative Care Program by the Joint Commission for the Advancement of Palliative Care, first in the state of Idaho (2013). Saint Alphonsus has also been awarded the 2013 Cambia Foundation Sojourns Award, for the advancement of palliative leadership and advocacy.

Digital Access: [http://advocacy.trinity-health.org/](http://advocacy.trinity-health.org/) • [advocacy@Trinity-Health.org](mailto:advocacy@Trinity-Health.org) • #PalliativeCare #PeopleCentered

Mission: We, Trinity Health, serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities.

Core Values: Reverence • Commitment to Those Who Are Poor • Justice • Stewardship • Integrity