

Foreword

“... to cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.”

Attributed to Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, founder of a 19th century tuberculosis sanatorium, this could easily be a defining slogan for palliative care because nearly all care models highlight the reigning importance of the individual as the central point of care. From its humble beginnings, the hospice movement and practice of palliative medicine have experienced a paradigm shift in the locus of treatments. Thought leaders and practitioners have transitioned from care when death is imminent to instituting palliative measures upon initial diagnosis of a life-threatening or serious illness.

The profession is riding a rising tide of recognition of the importance of best end-of-life care for the patient and family. Serving over 1 million patients each year and receiving high praise from families touched by impending death, palliative care still remains somewhat on the periphery of mainstream medicine until death approaches and curative therapies have been stopped. Families, however, appreciate and embrace the broad tenets of palliative care that promote and encourage communication, advance care planning, and interventions for the highest possible quality of life by providing continuous, competent, and comprehensive care that addresses each patient's specific complications and distress.

This book, envisioned and initiated by Dr. Howard (“Howie”) Smith and finished by his colleagues after his passing, brings an unparalleled exploration of our field. Assembled is an impressive faculty of thought leaders who are active researchers, practitioners, and educators, bringing critical background knowledge that has helped build the field, shape its domains, and inform future direction.

This valuable resource begins with issues that influence the staffing of a palliative care team, continues with the palliative issues associated with specific medical conditions and treatments across the scope of symptoms afflicting those with life-limiting illness, before concluding with unique populations and circumstances. In total, providers will raise their understanding of the role of palliative medicine through practical and investigative experiences of those who have struggled with the distinctive physical, psychosocial, and spiritual challenges that distinguish this population of patients in need of special care. Be confident that the experiences learned and presented here will strengthen the ability of both the newly credentialed physician and the mature practitioner's ability to deliver culturally sensitive and personalized care based on sound practical and theoretical experiences. Only by increased awareness and thought will we continue to advance empathetic practices that continue to define and improve our roles in advocacy, treatment, care, and support for the end of life patient by raising professional standards in the core palliative care competencies that are applied in the hospital, long term care facilities, and at home.

I am confident that this authoritative, comprehensive, diverse, and readable compendiums like *The Art and Science of Palliative Medicine* will further elevate and influence the potential, growth, development, policy, ethics, and very future of our field through balanced presentations about providing quality care as the dying patient comes to terms with their own mortality, and also for the families and their loved ones as grief, bereavement, and death approaches.

I add my gratitude, alongside the rest of the authors of this book, that Dr. Smith's vision has been realized so that patients, caregivers, and providers in the community will grasp his caring and unselfish dream in this important work that he felt would “set the standard for further development of collaborations between professionals from many disciplines and countries.” Ultimately, our successes will shift the caring professions from believing there is ‘nothing more we can do’ to realizing that ‘there is more that we can do’ by reaffirming the person and improving their quality of life.

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November 2013