Guiding Principles

The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC) is a national partnership of organizations and individuals from all walks of life – a non-partisan group of patient and consumer advocacy groups, health care professionals and providers, private sector stakeholders, faith-based organizations, and health care payers - committed to ensuring that all people with advanced illness receive high-quality, coordinated, and compassionate care consistent with their personal goals and values. Advanced illness occurs when one or more conditions become serious enough that general health and functioning decline, treatment begins to lose its effect, and quality of life increasingly becomes the focus of care -- a process that continues to the end of life.

As C-TAC works to transform advanced illness care in the U.S., the Coalition is united by six principles. These principles gauge our efforts in ensuring that you and your loved ones are empowered to make your own decisions, that you do so with trusted health care providers, and that you have access to a comprehensive set of health care and social services that reflect your wishes and values and honor your dignity. In pursuing that goal, C-TAC works to promote the highest quality systems of care for individuals living with advanced illness – systems of care that:

1. PROTECT HUMAN DIGNITY
   You and the people you consider family are respected and afforded the opportunity to make the best of every day.
   - You should be treated as whole person, not as a disease, and what you and your family value is of primary importance to the care team and is what drives patient care.
   - The people making decisions about how your care is delivered incorporate health care practices that honor and respect the basic dignity, values, and choices of every person throughout all stages of their illness and across care settings.
   - Care is delivered in a way that leverages the many inter-disciplinary skills present on a care team, a way that treats you as a whole person, a way that is inclusive of all of your needs (physical, spiritual, economic, psycho-social, legal, etc).
   - You are ensured access to equitable and affordable care without regard to socioeconomic, geographic, or religious status.

2. ENSURE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CARE
   You have access to the best possible medical treatment and support services, care that is consistent with your goals and values, available across the care continuum, and aims to improve function, ensure comfort, and protect health.
   - You are offered proven diagnostic and treatment strategies coordinated across care settings, and these strategies enhance quality of life as health conditions change.
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- Medical interventions are undertaken in collaboration with you and include evaluation of care in accord with the best available evidence-based standards of practice.
- Symptoms are anticipated and prevented when possible, evaluated and addressed promptly when they occur, and controlled effectively in an effort to promote wellbeing, and avoid pain, shortness of breath, or other symptoms that cause suffering.

3. PROVIDE CONTINUITY, COORDINATION, AND COMPREHENSIVENESS
Your care is continuous, coordinated, and comprehensive regardless of the setting in which it is delivered.
- You and your family receive an appropriate and timely response to your needs.
- Transitions between services, settings, and personnel are avoided where possible and seamlessly coordinated when necessary.
- You and your family have access to a comprehensive range of services in the appropriate time and setting.

4. ENSURE WELL-PREPARED, EMPOWERED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES
You and your family are well-prepared for everything that is likely to happen throughout the course of an illness and well-informed of all available treatment options and foreseeable clinical outcomes.
- The health care team actively supports you and your family in advance care planning.
- The health care team fully informs you and your family as to what to expect if the illness progresses.
- You and your family receive supplies and training needed to handle predictable events and further support if and when the unpredictable occurs.
- You and your family receive unobstructed, consistent access to health information, including your medical records, as well as to trusted clinical staff who can participate in shared decision-making in a way that is inclusive of all cultures and all levels of health literacy.

5. CUSTOMIZE CARE TO REFLECT PATIENT PREFERENCES
Your wishes are sought, respected, and followed.
- You and your family are aware of the full range of service options and are encouraged to make choices that matter according to your values.
- You receive the care and services of your choice in your preferred setting, and the health care team will do everything possible to honor those choices.
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- You have access to providers who appropriately and compassionately explain all available care options and respond to all questions and problems.
- Family caregivers’ concerns and needs are respected and addressed.

6. DEVELOP AND SUPPORT SKILLED, COMPASSIONATE, AND RESPONSIVE PROVIDERS
Your care team has the resources, support, and incentives to keep you and your health goals at the center, and to collaborate, communicate and coordinate care across the care continuum.
- You and your family have access to providers who communicate effectively.
- You and your family have access to highly trained providers with the best available medical knowledge and treatment planning resources.
- You and your family have access to compassionate health care and social service professionals who are effective in assisting patients across the care continuum.