Top Ten Things Palliative Care Clinicians Wished Everyone Knew about Palliative Care

1. Palliative care can help address the multifaceted aspects of care for patients facing a serious illness
2. Palliative care is appropriate at any stage of serious illness
3. Early integration of palliative care is becoming the new standard of care for patients with advanced cancer
4. Moving beyond cancer: palliative care can be beneficial for many chronic diseases
5. Palliative care teams manage total pain
6. Patients with a serious illness have many symptoms that palliative care teams can address
7. Palliative care can help address the emotional impact of serious illness on patients and their families
8. Palliative care teams assist complex communication interactions
9. Addressing the barriers to palliative care involvement: patient’s hopes and values equate more than a cure
10. Palliative care enhances healthcare value

Patients with Serious Illness Want:

- Pain and symptom control
- Achieve a sense of control
- Relieve burdens on family
- Strengthen relationships with loved ones
- Coordination of care
- Help navigate the medical system
- Avoidance of unnecessary treatments and/or hospitalizations
- Presence/Listening
- Making Accommodations
- Providing guidance
- Assistance making necessary plans
- Help fulfilling your wishes
- Avoid inappropriate prolongation of the dying process

Singer et al. JAMA 1999; 281: 163
Why is Palliative Care Important?

Palliative Care benefits to patients and families:

- Treatment of pain and other symptoms
- Coordination of care
- Help navigate the medical system
- Avoidance of unnecessary treatments and/or hospitalizations
- Presence/Listening
- Making Accommodations/Providing guidance
- Assistance making necessary plans
- Help with fulfilling patient’s wishes

Key Outcomes of Palliative Care:

- Reduction in symptom burden
- Improved patient and family satisfaction
- Earlier hospice referral
- Longer hospice enrollment
- Reduced ICU days
- Reduced costs
- Survival advantage

Wright, A et al. *JAMA* 2008; 300:1665
Morrison, RS et al *Archives Intern Med* 2008

"Don’t ask what’s the matter with me; ask what matters to me!"