Pediatric Palliative Care Improves Quality of Life for Children and Families

- **Adding an extra layer of support.** For most children and their families, treating the pain, stress, and other symptoms of cancer is as important as treating the disease. Consequently, pairing pediatric palliative care with delivery of anti-cancer therapies has emerged as the new model for optimal comprehensive care that focuses on the quality of life for the child and family as an essential aspect of managing the disease.

- **Team-based comprehensive care.** Pediatric palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, child life specialists, and others who partner with a child's oncologists and other clinicians to relieve the child's symptoms, help with communication and coordination of care, and ensure the child and family have the physical, emotional, and mental strength to carry on with daily life.

- **Surviving and thriving.** Pediatric palliative care is appropriate at any age or stage of disease, and can be provided along with treatments meant to cure. Recognizing palliative care's benefits to children and their families, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recently called for integration of early pediatric palliative care as an essential aspect of providing optimal treatment, beginning at the time of diagnosis and continuing along the child's course of care.

Quality of Life Campaign: Expanding Access for Families to Integrated Pediatric Palliative Care

Access to pediatric palliative care is improving, but must be expanded. The number of pediatric palliative care teams in ambulatory and hospital settings is on the rise, but the level of services and staffing available varies considerably across the country.

ACS CAN’s Quality of Life Campaign (acscan.org/qualityoflife), in partnership with the Patient Quality of Life Coalition, is focused on expanding workforce training and access to integrated palliative care services for all adults and children facing serious illness — at any age or stage — so these patients and families can benefit from the most comprehensive care possible.

- **The Patient Centered Quality Care for Life Act (H.R. 1666)** would increase palliative care research grants, expand primary palliative care skills training for clinicians across multiple disciplines, and educate the public, practitioners, and insurance providers about palliative care and its benefits in delivering better health and better care at lower cost across the entire care continuum.

- **The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (H.R. 1339 / S. 641)** would expand specialized palliative care training and support through leadership centers and medical and nursing school faculty development, and create essential incentives for health professionals to teach and/or practice integrated palliative care.

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