

# Sarasota Memorial

# Supportive Care Services

## What is Supportive Care?

Supportive Care is coordinated, patient-centered care aimed at improving quality of life for patients facing complicated medical problems related to prolonged illness or serious injury. Sometimes called “palliative care” or “palliative medicine,” it is not limited to end-of-life care. Supportive Care services are appropriate at any age and any stage of a serious illness or injury, and are often provided along with curative treatments.

## Specialized Supportive Care services at Sarasota Memorial include:

- ▶ Expert pain relief solutions
- ▶ Treating disease-related symptoms, such as fatigue, anxiety, breathlessness and nausea
- ▶ Assisting patients and loved ones with setting care goals and expectations
- ▶ Providing guidance in making complex treatment decisions
- ▶ Helping manage emotional and spiritual needs
- ▶ Providing resources and support for a patient’s loved ones
- ▶ Expert support during all stages of illness/injury

Supportive Care services are covered by Medicare/Medicaid and most private insurance plans.

## What Role Do Supportive Care Specialists Play in My Care?

Supportive Care specialists focus on caring for you and your loved ones, not curing your illness. The Supportive Care team, including board-certified doctors and practitioners, work with your other healthcare providers to develop a comprehensive care plan customized to meet your needs and wishes. They are your healthcare advocates.

## What are Some Benefits of Supportive Care?

- ▶ **Patient-centered care:** The Supportive Care team collaborates with the patient, the patient’s loved ones and the medical team to coordinate care around what is important to the patient and family.
- ▶ **Better quality of life:** Research shows that when a patient’s medical treatment includes Supportive Care, quality of life is improved, and many patients feel better for a longer period of time.
- ▶ **Added support:** Your Supportive Care team will connect you and your loved ones with useful resources and will provide an extra layer of support during your hospital stay.

## Who Needs Supportive Care Services?

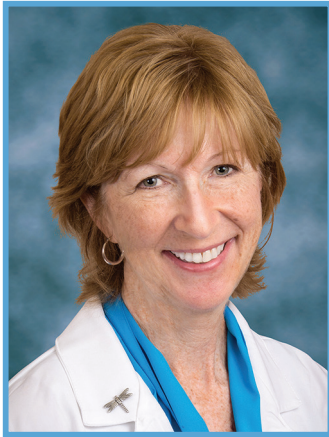
Anyone struggling with a serious illness or complicated medical problem(s) related to a prolonged illness or injury can benefit from Supportive Care services at any stage of the illness/injury. By design, these services not only benefit the patient but also support loved ones.

## How Can I Get a Consultation for Supportive Care?

Supportive Care consultations are available seven days a week. For a consultation during a Sarasota Memorial inpatient stay, ask your attending physician. For information about Supportive Care services, call **(941) 917-7572**.

# Meet Your Supportive Care Team

Sarasota Memorial's Supportive Care Services team aims to enhance the quality of life of patients affected by serious illness and to support caregivers and loved ones. Led by Medical Director Joelle Vlahakis, MD, the experienced, multidisciplinary team collaborates with patients' other medical providers — including primary care doctors and specialists such as oncologists, surgeons and cardiologists — to ensure customized, patient-centered care.



**Shawn Bliss, APRN, AOCN**



**Joelle Vlahakis, MD**  
Medical Director, Supportive Care  
Chief of Palliative Medicine

**Board Certified:**  
Internal Medicine, Palliative Care



**Brenda Edusei, APRN,  
ANP-BC, ACHPN**



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For more information or to schedule a Supportive Care consultation, please call (941) 917-7572.