

“Palliative Care: Improving Quality of Life for Families Working Through Life-Limiting Illnesses”

Gaines Richardson, MD, Monroe Clinic

Q. I hear Monroe Clinic offers a palliative care program for patients. What is palliative care?

A. The importance of “whole person” health care is a concept Monroe Clinic has embraced since its beginnings. The introduction of palliative care at Monroe Clinic is rooted in the principle that the most effective health care addresses the emotional, spiritual and physical needs of each patient.

Palliative care is designed to assist patients and their families who are working through life-limiting illnesses. While it does not replace curative care (care focused on overcoming disease and promoting recovery), it works in partnership with the patient’s primary physician and other medical specialists to provide:

- management of pain and symptoms such as problems with breathing, nausea, depression or fatigue
- emotional and spiritual support for patients and their families
- advance care planning and assistance with medical decision-making
- communication between the patient, family members and other healthcare providers

The decision to offer a palliative care program is based on several factors:

- Palliative care provides our physicians with a support network for their patients with life-limiting illnesses.
- As people age, palliative care addresses the changing needs of our patients.
- Most importantly, palliative care aims to improve the quality of care and the quality of life for our patients by helping them feel better, make informed medical decisions and navigate the sometimes-complicated medical system.

ABOUT DR. RICHARDSON:

As the leader of Monroe Clinic’s palliative care program, Gaines Richardson, MD, provides care that is focused on improving the quality of life and meeting the needs of patients and their families who are working through life-limiting illnesses. Call 608-324-2811 or 608-324-2685 to learn more about the palliative care program.