## The AFF Palliative Care Initiative

The Association of Faculty and Friends has supported palliative care at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and within the local community for over ten years. AFF members who volunteer to serve on the palliative care committee donate their time and energy in a number of ways.

- AFF members who have undergone the accredited training for palliative care visitation and also the volunteer training for the hospital visit in-patients at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.
- They participate in fund-raising events such as the annual Kay Kalenak Golf Tournament to help raise money for palliative care needs.
- They sponsor a bereavement-note program to send messages of support and caring to bereaved families along with helpful information about local resources for recovering from the loss of a loved one.
- AFF has donated broad informational resources on palliative care (books, videos, CDs, educational syllabuses, etc,) to the Hershey Public Library and the medical center's 'Women's Center' library and updates these educational resources routinely.
- AFF has sponsored educational seminars for its membership and the community on palliative care topics both at the public library and at the medical center.
- AFF has donated funds to provide special furnishings and supplies not commonly available in a hospital setting so that palliative care patients and their families may have an enhanced layer of comfort.

## World Health Organization (WHO) Definition of Palliative Care

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. Palliative care:

- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- affirms life and regards dying as a normal process
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death
- integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care
- offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death
- offers a support system to help the family cope during the patient's illness and in their own bereavement
- uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counseling, if indicated
- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications

