

# ***Starting the Conversation about Goals of Care***

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## **What are Goals of Care?**

- **All treatment options for health care have consequences.**
  - **It is important to understand those consequences in relation to your overall health, treatment, prognosis and impact to your quality of life.**
- **Your healthcare provider may or may not discuss this with you.**
- **You may or may not be able to make your wishes known in a crisis.**
  - **For these reasons it is important to have a conversation with your family, health care agent and your primary care provider.**
  - **Your goals of care can change over time making it important to have these conversations often.**

*“Suffering occurs when the care provided does not align with a patient’s goals. Patients have priorities in life besides just living longer and these goals vary from person to person. Patients care about quality of life above all else.” - Atul Gawande (Author of *Being Mortal*)*

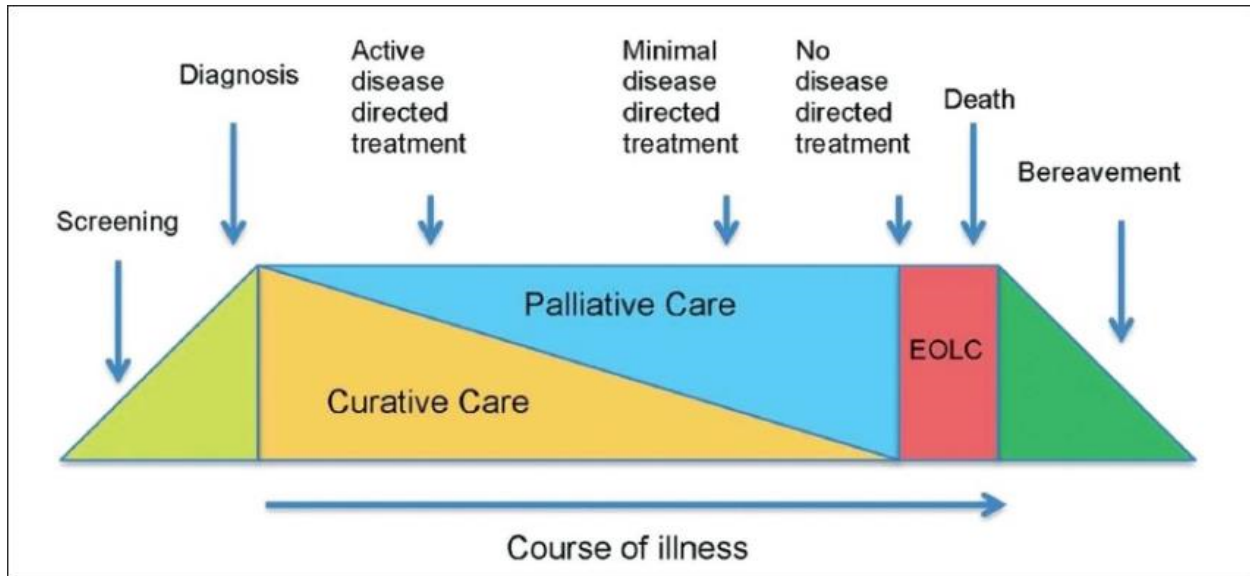
# Why Does this Happen?????

- No training for providers and nurses
  - Education is focused on curative care
  - Most schools do not offer courses in palliative, emotional or spiritual care
  - EOL care seen as a medical “failure”
- Society is focused on curative care
  - Expect to live forever
  - Technology
  - Die more slowly and older
  - No longer live with extended family
  - Death occurs in hospitals not at home
- Payment
  - Healthcare pays for curative care
  - ACP reimbursement Jan 2016

## Solutions:

Palliative Care- interdisciplinary team focus is to prevent and relieve suffering regardless of stage of illness or need for other therapies. Expansion of traditional medical model that includes goals of

- improved quality of life,
- optimal function,
- decision making



## Having the Conversation:

- What is your understanding now about your illness?
- How much information would you like about disease progression? Prognosis?
- If your health situation worsens, what is most important to you?
- What are your biggest fears and worries?
- Do your family or loved ones know about your choices?
- Goals of care change
- Advanced care planning is a process
- Never “One and done”

Resources: The Conversation Project [theconversationproject.org](http://theconversationproject.org)  
 Go Wish Cards - [codaalliance.org/gowish/](http://codaalliance.org/gowish/)