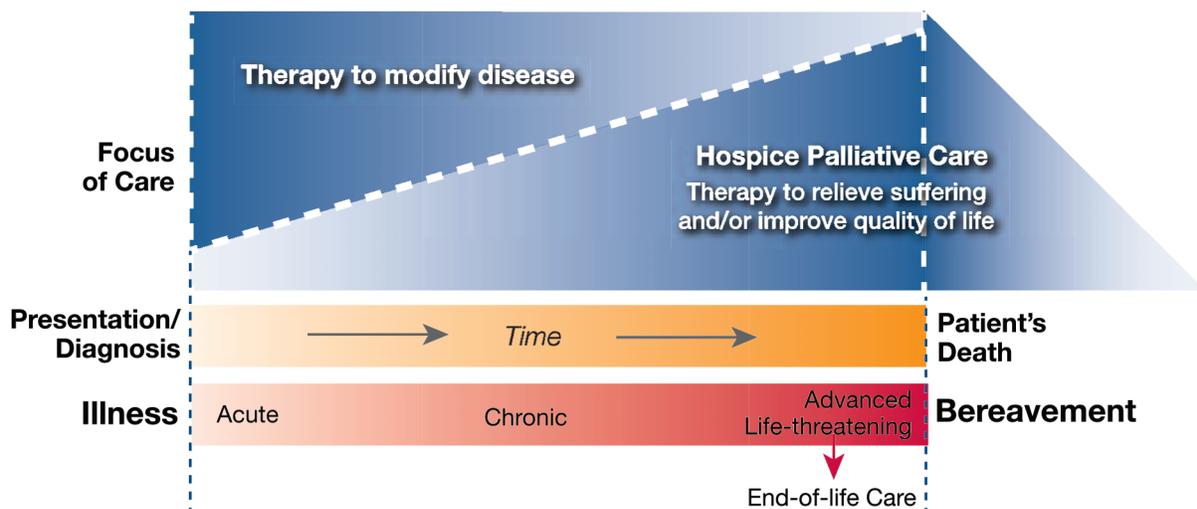


# Background Context

## What Are Palliative Care and End-of-life Care?

Palliative care refers to a philosophy and an approach to care. Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life for persons facing life-limiting illness and their families through the prevention and relief of suffering. It does this through the early identification, assessment and treatment of symptoms (4). Palliative care extends across the trajectory of life-limiting illness, including care at the point of diagnosis, during treatment and at the end of life, as well as grief and bereavement support (see **Figure 1** for a visual depicting the palliative care trajectory).

**Figure 1: A Schematic of the Palliative Care Trajectory**



**Source:** Reprinted from the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA). A model to guide hospice palliative care: based on national principles and norms of practice. Revised and condensed edition [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): CHPCA; 2013. Available from: <http://www.chpca.net/media/319547/norms-of-practice-eng-web.pdf>. Reprinted with permission.

**Note:** Other models exist that provide visual depictions of palliative care. One example is The Bow Tie Model by Dr. Pippa Halwey. For more information, please visit [http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en\\_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/For+Professionals/For+Professionals/The+Exchange/Current/The+Bow+Tie+Model+of+21st+Century+Palliative+Care.aspx](http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/For+Professionals/For+Professionals/The+Exchange/Current/The+Bow+Tie+Model+of+21st+Century+Palliative+Care.aspx)

According to the CHPCA, palliative care (also referred to as “hospice palliative care”) is an approach to care that aims to do the following:

- Relieve suffering and improve the quality of living and dying.
- Address the physical, psychological, social, spiritual (existential) and practical issues of persons and their families, and their associated expectations, needs, hopes and fears.
- Prepare persons and their families for self-determined life closure and the dying process and help them manage it.
- Help families cope with loss and grief during the illness and bereavement experience.
- Treat all active issues, prevent new issues from occurring and promote opportunities for meaningful and valuable experiences, personal and spiritual growth, and self-actualization (10).