ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Supportive care, also known as palliative care, is meant to relieve the symptoms and side effects of a disease and its treatment. It should be provided from the time of diagnosis and throughout the pancreatic cancer journey. Studies have shown that there are measurable benefits to supportive care, and that patients are more likely to adhere to their treatment and manage their illness in the absence of physical or emotional distress. Good supportive care can manage difficult side effects, as well as symptoms. It may enable patients and families to fight the cancer more effectively.

In this booklet, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network aims to provide basic information about supportive care options available to pancreatic cancer patients, survivors and caregivers; answer frequently asked questions; and help alleviate any misunderstandings about the intent of this type of care. This booklet can serve as a basis for discussion with healthcare professionals and loved ones who are in need of updated information on the principles of supportive care.

People with pancreatic cancer who are facing end of life will have special needs that are not covered in this booklet. Patient Central Associates at the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network are trained on a wide variety of topics relating to pancreatic cancer. They have access to resources that may help address these concerns.

Contact a Patient Central Associate toll-free at 877-2-PANCAN or by email at patientcentral@pancan.org. Associates are available Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

A glossary is provided at the end of this booklet for bold words in the booklet’s text.
1 UNDERSTANDING SUPPORTIVE CARE
2 The Purpose of Supportive Care in Cancer
3 Misunderstanding the Meaning of Supportive Care
3 When do Patients Need Supportive Care

5 SUPPORTIVE CARE SERVICES
6 Where are Supportive Care Services Delivered
6 Working with Healthcare Professionals to Obtain Supportive Care Services

10 SUPPORTIVE CARE FOR PHYSICAL CONCERNS
11 Pain
15 Jaundice
15 Bowel Changes
17 Nausea and Vomiting, Loss of Appetite and Taste Changes
19 Diabetes
19 Fatigue
20 Ascites
20 Skin and Nail Changes
22 Neuropathy
23 Low Blood Cell Counts
23 Blood Clots
24 Hair Loss
24 Mouth Sores