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## **San Francisco Community Approach to Improve Palliative Care Access February 2010**

**Goal:** Improve palliative care service provision in the San Francisco Bay Area through assessment, planning, coordination, education, and outreach.

**Problem:** The need for palliative care is increasing because of the aging population and growing prevalence of advanced chronic disease. State of the art palliative care programs offer symptom management, home visits, spiritual and other counseling. However, aging and other end-of-life populations continue to underutilize palliative and residential care options that increase comfort and lower costs of care.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the initiative is to:

- assess the quality, adequacy and utilization of palliative care services in SF and identify needs
- explore linkages and collaboration among existing programs
- devise an action plan for palliative care in SF in 2010 to:
  - Reduce policy and operational barriers that interfere with patient-centered care
  - Increase utilization and evaluation of the Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment ([POLST](#)) Form that advances dialogue and patient-centered end-of-life care
  - Educate underserved and minority populations on the potential benefits of palliative care
- implement the action plan and evaluate short term benefits in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- identify opportunities for future progress and identify potential resources

**Program Components and Team:** SHIRE will work with a broad and influential set of partners to devise and implement an action plan for San Francisco that will make a measurable impact on the awareness and use of palliative care options. Partners on the grant team that will help carry out project tasks include the SF Medical Society, SF Department of Health, UC-San Francisco, Ethnic Health Institute at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, the San Francisco Bay Area Network for End of Life Care, and the Sutter Health Sac-Sierra Region Palliative Care Program. Major activities include:

<b>Needs Assessment &amp; Services Inventory</b>	Collect, analyze and report data on the characteristics of current and potential palliative care-appropriate populations, inventory existing services to meet the need and describe remaining gaps
<b>Summit and Action Plan</b>	Convene a summit of approximately 50 partners to kick off the community-wide initiative and formulate approaches to address identified needs
<b>Implement Plan</b>	Enact steps laid out in community action plan, such as POLST training sessions
<b>Evaluation &amp; Dissemination</b>	Evaluate impact of approach on improving awareness of palliative care options, dissemination of tools, and reduced hospitalizations

Our community-based approach to palliative care improvement in San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area is designed to improve knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. We welcome participation in the coalition by Bay Area health departments, mayor's offices, medical societies, medical groups, hospitals, residential and home care providers, health plans, foundations, and patient advocates.