

Symptom Support Program

How would I get started with NorthShore's Symptom Support Program or get more information about it?

Your NorthShore physician can be your first guide in deciding whether the program is right for you. They can directly refer you to our program if, together, you decide that it can help. Once referred, you will be promptly contacted by a member of our care team.

You can also call us directly for more information, during usual business hours, at **(847) 503-4222**.

NorthShore University HealthSystem Symptom Support Program

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northshore.org



Improving Quality of Life
for Patients at Home.



What is NorthShore's Symptom Support Program?

Our Symptom Support Program is a home-based program designed to focus more intensively on keeping people comfortable at home, using specialists in Palliative Medicine. Our multi-disciplinary team works hard to improve the quality of life, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, for people living with a serious illness.

How do I know if NorthShore's Symptom Support Program is right for me?

Our program may be the right fit if you are experiencing pain or other symptoms at any stage of a serious illness and are having difficulty going to and from clinic appointments. By improving your symptoms, we can help you better tolerate aggressive treatments for a recently diagnosed illness or help you rehabilitate from an acute or chronic illness. We also help guide future decisions with the rest of your healthcare team, helping to honor your values and wishes, and those of your family.



What does the Symptom Support Program focus on to improve quality of life?

Palliative Medicine is a subspecialty of medicine that looks at the patient as a whole, not just at the illness. We:

- are experts at pain control, using medications and other modalities to make pain as tolerable as possible
- help with other symptoms like shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea and constipation
- support and counsel to relieve emotional and spiritual distress
- provide guidance in advance care planning and help in transitioning between different care settings
- provide an extra layer of support to enhance your care with your entire healthcare team

A multi-disciplinary team approach

NorthShore's Symptom Support Program includes nationally certified advanced practice nurses, board-certified palliative medicine physicians, a specially trained medical social worker, and a patient support associate to coordinate the program. By using a multi-disciplinary approach, we can ensure that all of your needs will be met within the Symptom Support Program.

What can I expect from our Symptom Support Program?

Our Symptom Support Program is a consult service at home. An advanced practice nurse will be assigned to you for regularly scheduled visits, once every two weeks on average, depending on your need. We have a 24 hour answering service, though visits are made during regular business hours. Our social worker is available for social or emotional support, and our team works together with your primary care physician and specialists to focus on improving your quality of life.

Where are these services offered?

Our program is designed to help patients who have a difficult time going back and forth for outpatient clinic appointments. Though we do not serve as a substitute for visits to your primary care physician or other specialists, we try to coordinate care with them. We visit where you are living, either in your home or an extended care facility, within our program's service area near any one of our four hospitals. Please call us at (847) 503-4222 if you are not sure if you live within our service area.

Is this program covered by my insurance?

This program is billed as a palliative care specialty consultative visit. All insurance policies, including Medicare, recognize this specialty and cover this visit as they would any other consult visit, minus any co-pay or deductible you would have. Call our support associate for further details. HMO plans would need to be in our network and approved through your primary care physician. Please call your insurance company if you have any specific questions on your coverage.

Is this program a hospice service?

No. Hospice is an insurance benefit that provides the most aggressive form of comfort care, meant for patients in the last stages of life when curative treatments are no longer available or desired. The Symptom Support Program is for patients who are not in the last stages of life and is meant for patients still seeking aggressive life-saving medical care or rehabilitation. This program is meant to be a consultative service to provide additional care to your overall care program.