

Blog, July, 2022

### The Full Meaning of Comfort Care

In the early days of my nursing career, I understood the term “comfort care” to be a last resort type of concept included on one’s living will. Of course, no one checked this box because it implied that there was no “hope” for one’s physical illnesses, bodily failures, or traumatic injuries. After all, when creating a living will, one does not often know the future circumstances of one’s death. A designated power of attorney for health care CAN and often does choose this option, but it still denotes a “last resort” to most people.

Recently (Summer, 2022), I was contacted by a group of nurses from Akron, OH who were close to opening a home dedicated to the care of hospice patients who had nowhere to go and /or no one to care for them after they were discharged from respite facilities. In short, these nurses are addressing the shameful gap in U.S. health care if you are poor or have no family caregiver. They call their home “Grace House: A Comfort Care Home” and they hope to make it a regional and national model.

This title, A Comfort Care Home, denotes an expansive, hopeful, and holistic type of care – a far cry from the “last resort” meaning that may be implied on advance directives. And they intend to use Comfort Theory as their guide to the holistic practice of comfort care. It has been my pleasure to work with these nurses and subsequently with lay persons who serve in a variety of roles such as activities, spiritual life, counseling, care giving, and volunteering. The educational module linked here is directed toward those lay people and describes the holistic aspects of complete comfort care.