

## **Integration of palliative care in an active Department of Oncology: The Rambam Medical Center experience**

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Since its inauguration in 1968, the Division of Oncology at Rambam Med Ctr has been a comprehensive cancer care facility and referral center for 8 general hospitals and many communal clinics in Haifa and Northern Israel.

The “palliative oncology team” is coordinated by a dedicated “palliative” nurse and includes physicians from the Oncology Division and Pain Relief Unit, social workers and a psychologist. Palliative care is provided in the palliative out-patient clinic (ad hoc in urgent cases), in the Oncology CAM (complementary-alternative medicine) clinic, in the Oncology-Day-Hospital facility, in the chemotherapy and radiotherapy wards, and in the different hospital departments.

**The Oncology Division is committed to a philosophy of continuity of care and non-abandonment:** patients are accompanied throughout all stages of disease and treatment of terminal patients is shared by the Division and community services. The day hospital unit and the in-patient wards act as Emergency Departments for patients with uncontrolled symptoms and “back-up” for community “Home Hospice” services and “Hospice for the Terminally Ill”.

Psychologic services include individual treatments, support groups and relaxation sessions for patients and family members.

Recently, the Oncology Division has been accredited by ESMO as a Designated Center of Integrated Oncology and Palliative Care.