Finding Comfort and Peace at the End of Life

This booklet was created to help physicians, patients and families — family in the broadest sense — deal more effectively with dying and death. Physicians can help their terminally ill patients and family members find comfort and peace at the end of life by studying this guide and reviewing the many websites and other resources listed at the end of each chapter.

Patients and families can use the information tailored specifically for them on the “For My Patients” pages related to the chapter topic and located at the end of each chapter. This information will help them plan how to live life to the fullest, take control of the dying process and find more comfort and peace during difficult times.

This booklet is filled with many medically concise how-to instructions. But softer words also are critically important when discussing and dealing with the end of life.

Dignity was the word used most frequently by the many contributors to this booklet. Comfort and caring, compassion and communication were heard often, as were respect and reassurance. Attention and active listening were emphasized, as well as spirituality and support.

We hope this booklet provides a new focus on dying and death and is a useful resource for you and your patients. It was originally produced in 2001 with a grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health and additional support from American Physicians. This updated guide has additional funding from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the Michigan State Medical Society Foundation.

For additional information about many health-related issues such as aging or long term care, visit the Michigan Department of Community Health website at www.michigan.gov/mdch and search under the Michigan Circle of Life or the End-of-Life Commission.

Information in this booklet regarding various Michigan laws is not intended to constitute legal advice. If you have a legal question, please contact an attorney.