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Date: Mon, Aug 31, 1992
To: Hospital Medical Directors
From: Jonathan Weisbuch, MD
Subject: Hospice and Palliative Care in DHS

1. Enclosed is a prepublication copy of David Cundiff's new book, *Euthanasia is NOT the Answer*, published by Human Press. I have also included some information relating to building a palliative care center at Rancho.
 2. He recommends, and I support, the creation of a palliative care facility under the direction of DHS, to serve the terminal-care needs of the patients we serve with cancer and AIDS. The terminal stay need only be a few days.
 3. I plan to be in contact with the Chief of the Medi-Cal Policy in Sacramento, to determine if Medi-Cal funding at the acute hospital rate would be available for these patients. If it is, and we are efficient, DHS might make a small surplus.
 4. In the past, a number of study groups and task forces have reviewed the question of palliative care, all of which have produced limited results. If the idea has merit from the patient care perspective and assuming it can be funded through Medicare or Medi-Cal or through private insurance, we should push for its adoption.
 5. I have asked Margaret to set a time for a conference call to include the hospital medical directors and Dr. Cundiff sometime during the week of September 14th, to discuss Dr. Cundiff's ideas, the appropriateness of establishing such a facility within DHS, and some of the possible sites.
 6. For this conversation, we will need more data:
 - How many patients on any given day in your facility would be better served in a bed dedicated to palliative care?
 - Do other facilities exist in your region of the county to serve these needs?
 - Would such a facility be appropriately located in your hospital, or region?
 - If a unit were established in DHS, would it generate private sector patients?
 - Will Medi-Cal or Medicare pay an acute bed-day rate?
 7. If each of you would remit your responses, we will be able to conclude the conversation in an hour. Thanks.
- cc: Ed Foley
Ellen Alkon, MD, MPH
David Cundiff, MD ✓