

The Supportive Care Center

Providing compassionate supportive care resources and services for our North Bay community.

MarinHealth serves one of the oldest and most rapidly aging populations in California. By 2030, an estimated one third of the people in Marin County will be over the age of 65. As they mature, many will experience conditions — diabetes, heart disease, cognitive decline — that could result in a dramatic health crisis and long-term health issues. Others may experience cancer, advanced organ disease, or a progressive neurological condition like Parkinson's disease.

Who will support these community members and their families and caregivers? Who will provide honest and compassionate answers to their difficult questions, help them navigate a complex healthcare system, and ease the challenging transition to hospice care, if needed?

This is the work of the Supportive Care Center, a small but mighty clinic that is vital to the mission of MarinHealth. The clinic's physician-led staff of a nurse practitioner, nurse, clinical social worker, chaplain and care coordinator, strives to address all forms of suffering in patients who face serious illness. Team members help manage debilitating symptoms — pain, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, existential distress, and depression. They provide supportive counseling and spiritual care. They connect patients and caregivers with local resources. They also help with Advance Care Planning, offering individual assistance and free public planning sessions.

MarinHealth's Supportive Care Center is unique among palliative care programs in the North Bay. It is the only program to have a stand-alone clinic, which offers a calm and welcoming environment for patients and their families to meet with the team. It is conveniently located next to MarinHealth Medical Center in the MarinHealth Cancer Care building. Clinic director and Palliative Medicine physician, Joshua Biddle, MD, a Marin County native, takes a personal approach to each patient, assessing for their biological, psychological and spiritual needs. Philanthropic support will enable this essential MarinHealth resource to expand its impact, serving people as they navigate their health.



"Our team strives to provide compassionate, loving care to patients and their families as they navigate serious, life-changing illness. With your support, we can continue to grow our program to meet the increasing needs of our community."
— Joshua S. Biddle, MD,
Palliative Care Medical Director

Caring for our community with skill, kindness, honesty, and integrity

As the population of the North Bay continues to grow and age, MarinHealth's Supportive Care Center will play an increasingly important role in the health and well-being of our community. Between 2019 and 2023, referrals and appointments grew 40-50%. Still, many Marin County residents are unaware of this vital program. Others may put off palliative care, fearing the implications of "hospice" and suffering needlessly when support is close at hand.



Those who connect with our Supportive Care Center receive the benefits of a comprehensive approach that supports patients physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually as they cope with serious illness and sometimes face their own mortality. Patients receive care that enables them to live at home rather than going to the Emergency Department or hospital. The Supportive Care Center staff also coordinate with primary care physicians and specialists so patients need not manage input from multiple doctors.

Philanthropic funds will be used to strengthen and expand the Supportive Care Center's services — for example, funding support groups so people with serious illness can connect with each other and helping more families in our community prepare for the future by establishing Advance Care plans. Gifts will ensure that critically ill patients in need can receive financial assistance with over-the-counter medications, food, housing, transportation to medical appointments, and other necessities. Because MarinHealth is committed to empowering its care team with knowledge and skills, funds will also support continuing education for clinic staff.

What can philanthropy do?

MarinHealth is committed to delivering whole-person care across the North Bay, contributing to the quality of life for people at every age and stage of life. When you make a gift toward the important work of the Supportive Care Center, you help ensure that seriously ill members of our community can receive empathetic care and skilled support when they need it most.

At-a-Glance

Your support will enable MarinHealth's Supportive Care Center to:

- Strengthen its mission to provide physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual care for people facing serious illness
- Launch support groups for patients
- Fund Advance Care Planning workshops
- Help patients in need with dire necessities, including over-the-counter medications, food, housing, and transportation for clinic/home visits
- Support continuing education and team/professional development for clinic staff
- Fund salaries to expand the team
- Increase awareness of the clinic through community outreach

To learn more or make a gift that advances the compassionate mission of the Supportive Care Center, contact MarinHealth Foundation at **1-415-925-7770** or **Foundation@mymarinhealth.org**.