Patients are living longer but not necessarily better and avoidable suffering often results when either appropriate treatment is not provided or over treatment is provided and the wishes of patients are not respected. The lack of good pain management and symptom control before and at the end-of-life are long standing problems that need to be corrected. The emergence of palliative care and increased palliative care programs can facilitate improved quality of life for seriously and terminally ill patients. New laws, the Palliative Care Information Act and Palliative Care Access Act, should result in many more as well as earlier and better discussions about palliative care options, including hospice, and an increase in the provision of palliative care for many more patients who will benefit.

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