



## **Statement on Palliative Care**

### **Committee of Origin: Palliative Medicine**

**(Approved by the ASA House of Delegates on October 21, 1998, and last amended on October 17, 2018)**

Patients with far advanced and irreversible diseases frequently experience significant pain and distressing symptoms that increase as their diseases progress. Most physically burdensome symptoms can be relieved with contemporary management methodologies. Quality patient care during all stages of illness requires that palliative (or comfort) treatment concepts be integrated into the care of all patients experiencing physical, psychological and existential/spiritual distress, but particular attention to comprehensive and coordinated palliative care is required for those with serious illnesses.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists believes that opportunities exist to improve care of patients with serious illnesses. Education and training of patients, families, health care workers and physicians should be undertaken to actively promote available, compassionate, comprehensive and interdisciplinary care for these patients. Anesthesiologists have skills that allow them to uniquely contribute to the care of patients with serious illnesses, and the American Society of Anesthesiologists supports the further education, training and practice of anesthesiologists interested in Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

Further, the American Society of Anesthesiologists believes that the improvements in palliative care should be based on values-based advanced care planning. This advanced care planning should attempt to minimize the sense of abandonment often described by patients near the end of life and the loss of control many patients feel. Anesthesiologists should always strive to relieve suffering, and address the psychological and spiritual needs of patients.