PCNOW Advocacy Agenda and Definitions

1. Palliative Care Definitions/Standards

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness—whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. [Center to Advance Palliative Care, 2014 http://getpalliativecare.org

What are Palliative Care’s Core Principles and Features?

Palliative care:
• aims to prevent and relieve suffering and supports the best possible quality of life
• is focused on patients with serious illness at any point in the illness trajectory, and their families
• is patient-centered, working to promote patient and family education in support of shared decision making with health professionals
• is provided by an interdisciplinary team of health care providers
• includes services provided by generalist and palliative care specialist clinicians

What are the Standards of Care in Palliative Care?


Specialty Palliative Care Programs: PCNOW encourages hospitals to adopt program features outlined in the Joint Commission Advanced Palliative Care Certification and the Center to Advance Palliative Care.

For non-hospital clinical sites, PCNOW encourages adoption of program outlined in The National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care 3rd edition 2013.
2. PCNOW Advocacy Agenda
The Palliative Care Network of Wisconsin (PCNOW) supports the following improvements to care across Wisconsin:

CLINICAL CARE
PCNOW:
• Encourages all health care settings to develop and implement a Palliative Care Services strategic plan, including minimum expectations for:
  ✓ Specialist palliative care services
  ✓ Generalist palliative care clinical competencies
  ✓ Processes for identification of unmet palliative care needs
  ✓ Quality metrics
  ✓ Quality improvement activities to ensure that unmet palliative care needs are being addressed and improved
• Advocates that palliative care services be integrated into any new health care delivery models, including Accountable Care Organizations and Patient Centered Medical Homes
• Recommends that all hospitals add a communication skills training and credentialing requirement for physicians, advance practice nurses and physician assistants who care for seriously ill patients. At a minimum, training should include the attitudes/knowledge/skills and behaviors related to three distinct communication skills:
  • Giving Bad News
  • Discussing Prognosis
  • Leading a goal of care meeting with patients and families
  • Training should include both didactic and experiential components

EDUCATION
PCNOW:
• Advocates for Wisconsin medical and nursing schools to establish a multi-year palliative care curriculum that includes both didactic and experiential training for all students
• Encourages graduate schools offering Master of Social Work programs to incorporate both didactic and experiential palliative care curriculum for students specializing in health-related fields
• Supports development and implementation of a strategic plan for generalist-level, palliative care clinical education for physicians, nurses and other key clinical providers in all health care settings
• Advocates for all Wisconsin clinicians who provide care to seriously ill patients to have opportunities to develop palliative care clinician competencies

FINANCING
PCNOW will promote payment models that encourage:
• Integration of palliative care services into home, long-term care, outpatient and inpatient care settings
• Reimbursement for specialist palliative care providers providing services in home, outpatient and inpatient care settings.