

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?

Clinical Guidelines: PCNOW endorses [The National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care 3rd edition 2013](http://www.nationalconsensusproject.org/guidelines_download2.aspx)

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.