

WHY PALLIATIVE CARE IS VITAL IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Palliative care principles and practices can support seriously ill patients, their families, and caregivers across all settings of care. Rural communities have unique opportunities and challenges in providing holistic serious illness care that enhances the quality of life for patients and their families or caregivers. The following key concepts and resources can assist with gaining a common understanding of palliative care and how to begin a rural community-based program.

Palliative care is a newer field for many health care providers.

This approach to managing serious and advanced illness centers on relieving suffering and improving quality of life for patients and their families or caregivers. Palliative care teams help patients and their families or caregivers understand treatment options and facilitate effective communication among health care professionals, patients, family members and caregivers—bringing together the support systems that patients need to determine how to plan for the best quality of life and care. Palliative care differs from hospice in that it is appropriate at any point in a serious illness and can be provided at the same time as curative treatment.

People in rural communities have less access to palliative care services, but potentially greater need.

To date, most palliative care programs have been developed primarily in large hospitals in urban settings. Delivery models for rural community-based palliative care lag even though rural populations are disproportionately ill, disabled, poor, and older. Rural adults also are more likely than their urban counterparts to have a range of chronic conditions.

Palliative care is growing in importance in care delivery.

As our population ages, as awareness of the benefits of palliative care grows, and as pressure to improve value in health care continues, palliative care will move to a place of greater prominence in the health care delivery system.

To learn more:

- [Introduction to Building a Community Palliative Care Program](#): An overview of the basics of palliative care and creating a program. (39-minute video), [slides](#) (46-page PDF)
- [Center to Advance Palliative Care](#): About Palliative Care overview including links to patient stories.
- [Palliative Care: The Relief you Need when you have a Serious Illness](#): Guide for patients and their families. from the National Institute of Nursing Research. (16-page PDF)

PALLIATIVE CARE REDUCES AVOIDABLE SPENDING AND UTILIZATION IN ALL SETTINGS

