When We’re All Together, the Patient Knows It: Creating an Interdisciplinary Learning Community in Palliative Medicine

Krista M. Hirschmann PhD
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Krista.Hirschmann@lvhn.org

Daniel Ray MD
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Daniel.Ray@lvhn.org

Elissa Foster PhD
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Elissa.Foster@lvhn.org

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarlyworks.lvhn.org/medicine

Part of the Medical Sciences Commons

Published In/Presented At

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by LVHN Scholarly Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in LVHN Scholarly Works by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact LibraryServices@lvhn.org.
We would like to thank The Kenneth B. Schwartz Center, which supported a .25 FTE for a facilitator and Mapture Contact Center, whose administrative support enabled us to carry out these programs successfully. We are grateful to the Abram Samuels Fund and to our many community partners who supported our efforts.

**Context**

The Palliative Medicine Scholars (PaIMS) program was initiated to:

- Foster the culture of palliative medicine across the Lehigh Valley Health Network
- Develop faculty for an anticipated Palliative Medicine Fellowship
- Reinforce OACIS (Optimizing Advanced Complex Illness Support), an interdisciplinary team-based program that facilitates communication, self-management, and patient-centered care for those with complex illness.

**PaIMS** is open to anyone with a personal or professional interest in palliative care. Attendees include:

- Providers
- Students
- Volunteers
- Patients and their families
- Community members

**Process**

PaIMS participants collaboratively designed a curriculum grounded in five core competencies:

- Medical Content
- Communication skills
- Professional awareness
- Psychosocial issues
- Systemic administration issues related to palliative medicine

**Who**

PaIMS Participants

- Physician
- Advanced Practice Provider
- Pharmacist
- Social Worker
- Administrative Support
- School Interns
- Researchers
- Patients and their families
- Community members

**Systemic administration issues related to palliative medicine**

- Leadership
- Ethics
- Finance
- Quality Improvement

**Theoretical Grounding**

The following core theories informed our facilitation of PaIMS as a learning community. These theories include:

- Competency and Competence
- Community of Practice
- Interprofessional Education
- Self-Determination Theory
- Interdependence

**Results**

In the first 16 months, PaIMS has grown to include 130 people on our session sign-in sheet and 275 people on our email distribution list. Sample topics include:

- Patient-Centered Interviewing/Pain Assessment
- Overview of Pain Medications
- Psychosocial Issues with Suffering
- Ethical Principles
- Resources & Processes
- Breathing/Relaxation
- Coping Strategies
- Nonpain Symptom Assessment & Management
- Neuropathic Pain
- Grieving about Advance Directives
- Vent Withdrawal
- Still Suffering
- Honoring Cultural
- Spiritual Practices
- Hospice Referral
- Death Pronunciation
- Organ Donation
- Visits/Post-Pain

**Conclusions**

1. By using a collaborative educational forum and engaging people through their personal experiences and professional expertise, we have strengthened the palliative medicine culture and community of our hospital network.
2. Participants’ feedback and active participation indicates that we created a successful and sustainable interdisciplinary learning community.
3. PaIMS reduces cross-disciplinary tensions by emphasizing common professional values and demystifying the role of other providers.
4. The PaIMS culture of personal connection in a safe and facilitated environment carries over to the floors and bedside where participants feel more comfortable and trusting of other members of the team.

---

**Acknowledgements:** We would like to thank the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center, which supported .25 FTE for a facilitator and support for the participants during our inaugural year and the Abram Samuels Fund.

---

"When we're all together, the patient knows it:" Creating an Interdisciplinary Learning Community in Palliative Medicine

Krista M. Hirschmann, PhD; Daniel Ray, MD; Elissa Foster, PhD
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

---

**News**

- Coping Strategies
- Nonpain Symptom Assessment & Management
- Neuropathic Pain

**Issues with Suffering**

- Ethical Principles
- Resources & Processes
- Breathing/Relaxation
- Coping Strategies
- Nonpain Symptom Assessment & Management
- Neuropathic Pain

---

EINSTEIN's "When we're all together, the patient knows it:" from each other, solve problems and build relationships to improve patient care and the feeling of connectedness and ownership of staff."

"I don't think I had a thorough understanding of what everybody did. It (PalMS) increased my appreciation and ability to support them."

"The PalMS culture of personal connection in a safe and facilitated environment carries over to the floors and bedside where participants feel more comfortable and trusting of other members of the team."