



3 National Nursing Organizations Join Forces to Transform the Care and Culture of Serious Illness

The Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA), the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Foundation (HPNF), and the Hospice and Palliative Credentialing Center (HPCC, formerly known as NBCHPN) have joined forces to transform the care and culture of serious illness

PITTSBURGH – Three national nursing organizations today announced a collaborative effort to transform the care and culture of serious illness in the United States. Together, the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA), the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Foundation (HPNF), and the Hospice and Palliative Credentialing Center (HPCC, formerly known as NBCHPN) launched a \$5 million campaign aimed at increasing the number of certified hospice and palliative nurses, advancing research into best practices of hospice and palliative care, elevating palliative nursing leadership at the local and national levels, and enhancing nursing competence through certification. The Advancing Expert Care Campaign has already raised more than \$1 million in gifts and pledges.

The announcement of the campaign comes on the heels of the Institute of Medicine’s 500-page report, “Dying in America,” which was released September 17. The 21-member IOM committee that authored the report found that, despite efforts to improve access to hospice and palliative care over the past decade, there are still major gaps, including a shortage of caregivers proficient in palliative care.

“Three organizations, one common mission, and one shared vision – at no time has a strategic alignment been more critical,” said Sally Welsh, the CEO of HPNA, HPNF, and HPCC. “As the number of families impacted by serious illness continues to grow, the role of hospice and palliative nurses becomes increasingly important in the delivery of healthcare. For those patients battling serious illness, hospice and palliative nurses serve as key leaders in both care delivery and care coordination. It is our goal to not only increase the number of nurses who specialize in hospice and palliative care, but also improve upon the high level of hospice and palliative care that already exists.”

The goal of the Advancing Expert Care Campaign is to transform the care and culture of serious illness through six core strategies: 1) Ongoing evaluation and research into the educational needs of hospice and palliative professionals; 2) the design of programs, courses, and curriculum to advance expert care in serious illness; 3) advancing research into best practices of hospice and palliative care, while supporting and developing palliative nurse researchers; 4) the development of nursing leadership programs at the local and national levels; 5) enhancing nursing competence through certification; and 6) the creation of programs to support and increase the number of nurses and other professionals certified in hospice and palliative care.

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“There is a perfect storm brewing,” said Jennifer Gentry, the president of the HPNA Board of Directors. “With the aging Baby Boomer population, the number of people with serious illness is growing, and there will soon be a critical shortage of hospice and palliative professionals. Our ability to adequately care for patients with serious illness could soon become a critical issue, which is why HPNA, HPNF, and HPCC decided the time was right to jointly tackle this issue with such an ambitious campaign.”

By designing and offering education for hospice and palliative nurses and other professionals that take into account changes in the healthcare delivery model, advances in technology, and shifting patient demographics, HPNA, HPNF, and HPCC will not only create more skilled hospice and palliative professionals, but also grow the number of certified caregivers that can help close the gap in what could be a critical shortage of professionals.

“Our goal is to develop and offer programs to increase the number of nurses and other staff who are certified in hospice and palliative care, as well as the level of professional competence,” said Kathie Kobler, the president of the HPCC Board of Directors. “These three organizations are going to take the lead in developing and implementing programs that support palliative nurse leaders who will help transform the care and culture of serious illness from the bedside to the national level. We also want to identify opportunities to enhance the recruitment and retention of these nurses.”

The number of certified hospice and palliative nurses needed to provide care for this growing population is increasing. Currently, there are approximately 13,000 nurses certified by HPCC in hospice and palliative care. As part of the Advancing Expert Care Campaign, the three organizations plan to develop and implement strategies to collect palliative nursing workforce data to better understand and fulfill the need.

“We know there is a shortage today of certified hospice and palliative nurses,” said Jane Sidwell, the president of the HPNF Board of Directors. “The Advancing Expert Care Campaign will fund needed education, research, advocacy, and leadership programs that will help us attract more nurses into this profession while retaining those nurses who have already chosen to specialize in this field, which, in turn, will help us avert a healthcare crisis in the near future.”

In addition to unveiling the Campaign, it was also announced that the three organizations strengthened their strategic alignment by adopting shared mission and vision statements. The shared mission statement of the three organizations is “advancing expert care in serious illness,” while the shared vision is “to transform the care and culture of serious illness.” These singular mission and vision statements formed the foundation for the strategic planning of the Advancing Expert Care Campaign.

With the announcement of the Advancing Expert Care Campaign and shared mission and vision statements, the HPNA, HPNF, and HPCC also launched a joint website: <http://www.AdvancingExpertCare.org>. Contributions to the Campaign can be made directly on the website.

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