

## **Palliative Medicine Elective**

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**Course Overview:** The Palliative Medicine Elective provides residents with hands-on experience caring for patients with advanced illness.

**General learning objectives** include:

1. To gain an understanding of the role of hospice and palliative medicine in the care of patients with chronic and advanced illness including:
  - Identifying current gaps in end-of-life care
  - Understanding the relationship between “hospice” and “palliative care”
  - Understanding the interdisciplinary team model
  - Understanding the ‘myths’ of hospice and the Hospice Medicare Benefit
  - Recognizing emerging models of palliative care services delivery
2. To gain knowledge and skills in the assessment of patients with advanced and terminal illness including:
  - Assessing goals of care
  - Assessing the patients’ physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs
  - Assessing patients’ functional ability
  - Assessing medical decision-making capacity
  - Discussing hospice and palliative care services with patients and families
3. To gain knowledge and skills in practical symptom management including:
  - Assessing and managing pain
  - Assessing and managing non-pain symptoms (e.g., nausea, SOB, depression)
4. To gain an understanding of other key topics in palliative care including:
  - Understanding and communicating prognosis
  - Defining “suffering”
  - Understanding and discussing physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia
  - Discussing artificial nutrition and hydration at the end of life
  - Identifying “hope” at the end of life
  - Providing culturally sensitive care
  - Providing care in the last hours of living
  - Understanding caregiver needs, grief and bereavement
5. To gain familiarity with local and national palliative and hospice care resources

**Course Requirements:**

- Attend and participate in all scheduled activities
- Complete pre- and post-tests
- Complete and return Elective Evaluation form

If for any reason you cannot attend a specific scheduled event (or need to leave early/ come in late etc.), you *must* contact 1) the person you are scheduled to see (e.g., the care team at the Hospice of St. John) and 2) Lindsay Vassar (The Life Quality Institute) at 303-398-6326.

**Course Responsibilities:**

The Palliative Care Elective consists of two primary components:

1. Clinical training at the Hospice of St. John
2. Other experiences and didactics in palliative care

**Clinical training at Hospice of St. John**

You will provide medical care for patients on the CU inpatient service at the Hospice of St. John (HSJ) during this rotation. Your specific responsibilities (shared with students on the Hospice Elective) include (*prioritized most important to least important*):

***Inpatient Setting:***

1. Perform and document Admission H&Ps on all new inpatient admissions.
2. Respond to the needs of all 'high acuity' patients (patients with a "GI" (General Inpatient) designation). Work with the care teams to identify particularly active/difficult issues. Document your care through progress notes.
3. Attend one or more Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) Meetings and act on plans.
4. For any patient you see, document a weekly progress note.
5. *[Recommended, but not required]* At least once during the month, attend a patient's death. Observe the physiology of the final moments of life, and support the patient's family or loved ones. Pastoral care and HSJ nurses can help identify patients who are actively dying ("on watch").

***Outpatient Setting:***

1. Visit one or more hospice patients at home during your elective month. Your first visit will be conducted with the Home Hospice nurse; subsequent visits can be arranged either alone or with other members of the interdisciplinary care team.

During the month, you will work with Gerry Synnott, NP, who will help orient you to the HSJ care system. If medical students are participating in the fourth year Hospice Elective, please coordinate with Gerry and the HSJ staff to provide additional guidance and teaching. I recommend (but do not require) that you keep a notebook/ journal during the month to 1) document questions, and 2) provide an opportunity for introspection and reflection.

**Contact Information:**

Kellie Woodman, Administrative Assistant

Hospice of St. John  
1320 Everett Ct, Lakewood  
303-232-7900  
303-232-3614 (fax)

Gerry Synnott, NP  
Hospice of St. John  
gsynnott@hospiceofsaintjohn.org

Directions: Take 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. West to the Garrison/ Carr exit, turn right (North) until 14<sup>th</sup> (following stop light), turn right. Turn right again at Everett Ct.

### **Other Experiences:**

In addition to your core time at the Hospice of St. John, you will meet with Dr. Johnson, Dr. David Nowels and/or Dr. Jeanie Youngwerth during the month to learn more about pain and symptom management. You may also have the opportunity to participate in a home- or hospital-based palliative care experience designed to broaden your exposure to the care of patients who are not yet ready and/or eligible for hospice care:

1. *Outpatient Palliative Care: Kaiser Permanente*
2. *Kaiser Permanente Inpatient Palliative Care Consultation*

Specific experience objectives and contact information are listed below.

### **Outpatient Palliative Care Assessment: Kaiser Permanente**

During this ½ to 1 day rotation, you will participate in a home-based palliative care assessment under the guidance of a Kaiser palliative care physician.

### **Objectives:**

1. To develop knowledge and skills in palliative care assessment including:
  - The ascertainment of patients' and families' goals and expectations for care
  - The assessment of common symptoms in patients with advanced illness
  - The assessment of patient function and social supports
2. To gain an understanding of family caregiver needs and burdens

### **Contact Information:**

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Lea Ratliff, MD  
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Directions: Variable; coordinate directly with MD facilitator(s). Call the physician (as noted on your calendar) one day before the session for details.

### ***Kaiser Inpatient Palliative Care Consultation***

During this ½ -1 day rotation, you will observe a hospital-based palliative care consult team at Exempla St. Joseph and/or Exempla Good Samaritan Hospitals. As a guest, your role is to observe the team during their interactions with patients, families and providers. Feel free to share observations and questions with your attending MD and during team debriefing sessions.

#### Objectives:

1. To describe an interdisciplinary palliative care team and consult
2. To observe key elements of end-of-life communication

#### Contact Information:

Variable; depending on availability, you will meet the palliative care team at either Exempla St. Joseph Hospital (ESJH, 18<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, Denver) or Good Samaritan Medical Center (EGSMC, Lafayette). The palliative care contact phone (carried by a palliative care nurse) at each facility is:

ESJH, 303-909-2882  
EGSMC, 303-345-8156

**Directions:** Exempla St. Joseph Hospital is located at 18<sup>th</sup> and Franklin in Denver. You can valet park (free) at the front of the hospital. Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center is located at 200 Exempla Circle in Lafayette. Drive north on I-25 to the Boulder Turnpike (Highway 36). Take the Turnpike (driving NW toward Boulder) to Highway 287. Turn north and drive several miles. The hospital will be on the east side of Highway 287. Visitor parking and the main entrance are on the east side of the hospital.

**Palliative Care Resources:**

Written resources for the Palliative Care Elective include:

1. Palliative Care Syllabus
2. Fast Facts

**Palliative Care Syllabus:**

The Palliative Care Syllabus will provide you additional resources related to the core and additional experience objectives. The Syllabus consists of 5 major sections:

- 1) Hospice and Palliative Care
- 2) The Palliative Care Assessment
- 3) Pain and Symptom Management
- 4) Other Key Topics in Palliative Care
- 5) Palliative Care Resources

**Fast Facts:**

A compilation of palliative care “pearls” from the End-of-Life Physicians’ Education Resource Center (EPERC). The index of available Fast Facts is included on the following pages. Refer to the website [www.eperc.mcw.edu](http://www.eperc.mcw.edu) to access Fast Facts and/or, if preferred, download the Fast Facts on to your phone or PDA (free).

Additional written materials and evidence-based articles will be provided as needed based on specific questions or clinical issues.