

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

New Competencies for Graduate Nursing Education in Primary Palliative Care: G-CARES

Polly M. Mazanec, PhD, RN, FPCN, FAAN¹

Betty R. Ferrell, PhD, MA, FAAN, FPCN²

Pamela Malloy, MN, FAAN, FPCN³

Rose Virani, MHA, BSN, RN, OCN, FPCN²

(1)FPB School of Nursing, CWRU, Cleveland, OH, USA

(2)Nursing Research and Education, City of Hope, Duarte, CA, USA

(3)American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Washington, DC, USA

Master's and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) nursing students will play a critical role in the care of the more than 117 million Americans, from pediatric to geriatric patients, who are living with serious illness (CDC, 2018). These patients require palliative care; however, the number of specialty palliative care practitioners will not be able to meet the future demand. Thus, it is critical that graduate nursing students be prepared to address this gap by becoming educated about primary palliative care. These future nurse leaders must learn principles of primary palliative care in order to advocate for and provide quality palliative care in their roles in clinical practice, administration, or academia (American Nurses Association (ANA) and Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA) *Call for Action: Nurses Lead and Transform Palliative Care*, 2017). However, nurses cannot practice what they do not know. A generous three-year grant from Cambia Health Foundation is supporting a group of nationally known palliative care nursing leaders to develop competencies and an online curriculum to educate graduate level nursing students.

In August, 2018, a group of 15 experts in nursing education and palliative care came together to develop graduate level primary palliative care competencies. They identified the importance of separating out competencies that must be met by all students, whether providing direct or indirect patient care, as well as specific competencies for those who will be providing direct care. The document, **G-CARES (Graduate- Competencies And Recommendations for Educating Nursing Students)** was submitted to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in December 2018 for their review and endorsement. Previously, AACN endorsed the *CARES Document*, 17 palliative care competencies for undergraduate nursing students in January, 2017. *CARES* guided the development of an online curriculum in 2017 that is preparing undergraduate students to provide basic primary palliative care to seriously ill patients across the lifespan. In the first 20 months since the launch of the online curriculum, over 230 nursing programs across the nation and more than 20,000 students have enrolled in the curriculum. The creation of the *G-CARES* document and development of an easily accessible online curriculum is modeled after this successful undergraduate project. *G-CARES* is a timely and essential document regarding nursing education to lead change, design and implement

innovative models of primary palliative care delivery, build and lead interprofessional teams, and evaluate the outcomes of safe, evidence-based, and effective care.

G-CARES: Primary Palliative Care Competencies for Master's and DNP Nursing Students

The *G-CARES* document contains two sets of competencies. These competencies align with the AACN Master's and DNP Essentials and the 4th edition of the *NCP Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care*. The first eight primary palliative care competencies are expected of all graduate nursing students, including master's, (i.e. advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNL), nurses in education, administration, informatics, and public health, etc.) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students who will be **directly or indirectly** providing primary palliative care for seriously ill patients and their families, from infants and children through geriatric populations, and across the illness trajectory. The second five primary palliative care competencies are expected of graduate nursing students who will be providing **direct** primary palliative care across any clinical, community, or technology-mediated (telehealth) setting.

Ensuring Students Achieve the Competencies Outlined in the G-CARES Document

Master's and DNP programs across the U.S. should adopt these competencies and ensure that students are prepared to provide and promote quality palliative care for the growing number of patients with serious illness. The *G-CARES* project nursing educators have begun to develop an online curriculum that will meet these competencies. The curriculum is six one-hour modules addressing: Principles of Palliative Care; Communication in Serious Illness; Pain Management; Symptom Management; Care During Final Hours; and Leadership in Ensuring Quality Palliative Care. Each module is interactive and contains video simulations of APRNs providing primary palliative care and advocating for palliative care services as nurse leaders. Case studies are woven throughout the modules. After successful completion of the six-module curriculum, students are awarded a certificate of training in palliative care. The online curriculum will be released August 2019.

The online curriculum makes integration of the palliative care content into saturated graduate programs smooth and feasible. The modules can be incorporated into a student assignment and completed according to the flow of the program and courses required. Faculty will be able to individualize the use of the curriculum based on the program timeline.

Future graduate-prepared nurses, working in any clinical, administrative or education setting, can now be prepared to meet the needs and demands of the growing population of patients with serious illness and their families with the *G-CARES* competencies and corresponding online primary palliative care curriculum.

Title:

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Keywords:

G-CARES competencies, MSN & DNP nursing education and palliative care

References:

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Abstract Summary:

This session highlights how to ensure that Master's and Doctor of Nursing Practice students meet the new 2019 palliative care competencies, G-CARES, which address improving palliative care access and delivery across all clinical settings, for all those with serious illness and their families.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction

- A. Growing demand for care for the seriously ill
- B. Graduate level nursing students must be prepared to meet this need
- C. Grant-funded project designed to educate nursing students to fill palliative care gap
- D. *G-CARES* (Graduate Competencies And Recommendations for Educating Nursing Students)

II. Expert Nursing Panel Developed *G-CARES*

- A. AACN Board review slated for Jan. 2019
- B. Online curriculum in development for release August 2019

III. Key Aspects of *G-CARES--Competencies*

- A. Competencies for all MSN and DNP students in indirect patient care
- B. Competencies specific for students preparing for an APRN role and direct patient care

III. Conclusion & Implications for Graduate Nursing Programs

- A. Preparing students to meet the *G-CARES* competencies is critical
- B. An interactive online curriculum will support faculty and students to meet competencies
- C. Future graduate nursing leaders will provide and promote quality palliative care

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Polly M. Mazanec, PhD, RN, FPCN, FAAN
CWRU
FPB School of Nursing
Associate Research Professor
Cleveland OH
USA

Author Summary: Dr. Mazanec has presented palliative care topics at national and international conferences, including STTI in Australia and ELNEC educational conferences in Austria and Japan. She has been invited to speak on palliative care topics for national nursing organizations such as ONS and HPNA.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Betty R. Ferrell, PhD, MA, FAAN, FPCN
City of Hope
Nursing Research and Education
Professor; Director of City of Hope Nursing Research and Education
Duarte CA
USA

Author Summary: Dr. Ferrell is an internationally recognize nursing scientist in the areas of oncology and palliative care. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and has received numerous awards. She has over 300 publications in peer-reviewed journals and textbooks and is the editor of the JHPN. She is the PI on the ELNEC-Undergraduate Curriculum Project.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Pamela Malloy, MN, FAAN, FPCN
American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
Director and Co-I for ELNEC; Special Advisor for Global Initiatives AACN
Washington DC
USA

Author Summary: Ms. Malloy is the Co-Director of the ELNEC project and the special advisor of the Global Initiatives at AACN. She has lead the ELNEC international work including the nursing leadership courses in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. She has published and presented widely on palliative nursing education and palliative care.

Fourth Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Rose Virani, MHA, BSN, RN, OCN, FPCN
City of Hope
Nursing Research and Education
Senior Research Specialist
Duarte CA
USA

Author Summary: Rose Virani is the lead project director of the national and international ELNEC Project. She has taught palliative nursing for more than 20 years and has been a co-investigator on the ELNEC-Undergraduate curriculum. Ms. Virani has published and presented nationally and internationally on palliative and end-of-life care.