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Creating Opportunities for Research Collaboration

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Background: Ninety million people in the United States are living with serious illnesses, and that number is expected to rise as more people are living longer. Many individuals live with complex health conditions and experience multiple symptoms associated with their illnesses and treatments. Palliative care addresses the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and families struggling with serious illnesses. In response to the need to prepare undergraduate nursing students to provide primary palliative care, an expert panel of nursing faculty and palliative care leaders developed 17 competencies in palliative care that nursing students need to achieve by graduation. Subsequently, the national End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) Team released an innovative online curriculum to ensure that primary palliative nursing education is available for all nursing students. The ELNEC-Undergraduate (ELNEC-UG) curriculum consists of six modules: Introduction to Palliative Nursing; Communication in Serious Illness; Pain Assessment and Management; Symptom Assessment and Management; Loss, Grief, and Bereavement; and Final Hours. This innovative curriculum will help increase access and standardize palliative care education, meet the palliative care competencies outlined in the palliative care competence document, strengthen the palliative care workforce globally, and improve palliative care provision to patients with serious illness and their families.

Purpose: An opportunity emerged to collaborate as various educators were beginning to grapple with the best practices for implementation of ELNEC-UG at their respective institutions. A team of early adopters and champions of palliative care education came together in early 2017 to network, share implementation ideas, and began to envision evaluation of ELNEC-UG's effectiveness in preparing nursing students to care for patients with serious illness. This presentation will describe how nurse educators and researchers from across the country collaborated to explore implementation and outcomes of incorporating the ELNEC-UG online modules into their respective programs.

Methods: ELNEC-UG administrators facilitated networking of faculty from across the country and a committed group of researchers representing expertise in education, research, and program evaluation developed. Over time, team members were added through a grassroots process of networking within the field of palliative care education and research. As of November 2018, the team is comprised of 15 scholars located in Washington, California, Oregon, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Utah, Alabama,

North Dakota, and South Carolina. Each scholar utilizes the ELNEC-UG curriculum within their respective programs in unique ways.

Results: As a result of regular meetings, a pilot research plan has been developed to ensure consistent evaluation of the ELNEC-UG curriculum across programs. Team members explored research designs that could adapt to different implementation methods. A longitudinal design with repeat measures at pre-ELNEC-UG implementation, post-ELNEC-UG implementation, and 6-month follow-up is currently being utilized by team members. The team conducted a literature search to identify instruments measuring palliative care knowledge, attitudes, and perceived competence associated with completion of the ELNEC-UG curriculum. Several instruments were identified, however, there were no knowledge or perceived competence measures that aligned with the most recent palliative care competencies issued by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and ELNEC-UG curriculum. The team has worked to develop and test new measures for these learning outcomes, which are now being utilized across multiple institutions. Data collection that coincides with the research plan is also currently underway across the country. To facilitate communication, the team utilizes conference calls and an online platform to house shared study-related materials. Various team members have disseminated work from the collaboration at national meetings and in publications.

Conclusion: This grassroots collaboration has demonstrated a creative way for researchers and educators to come together across institutions to support transformation of palliative care education and science. The process has been inclusive and accommodating of the needs of individual institutions, educators, and researchers.

Title:

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Keywords:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

This presentation will describe how nurse educators and researchers from across the country collaborated to explore implementation and outcomes of incorporating the End of Life Nursing Education Consortium Undergraduate (ELNEC-UG) online modules into their respective programs.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction

- A. definition of palliative care
- B. need for palliative care services globally
- C. need for all nurses to be educated in palliative care

II. Body

- A. The End of Life Nursing Education Consortium Undergraduate (ELNEC-UG) curriculum provides evidenced-based palliative care education in an online format
 - 1. Development of the ELNEC-UG curriculum
 - a) national palliative care nursing competencies
 - b) development of ELNEC-UG through grant-funded research
 - 2. Composition of ELNEC-UG
 - a) Six modules designed for entry-level nurses
- B. Need for evaluation of ELNEC-UG through research
 - 1. Multiple researchers and educators expressed interest in being early champions of ELNEC-UG
 - a) Team developed through informal, grassroots efforts
 - b) Team members represent many states and nursing programs
 - c) Technology facilitated team meetings and collaborative efforts
 - 2. Team identified research gaps that can be addressed through multi-site testing
 - a) Lack of a palliative care knowledge measure
 - b) Lack of a palliative care perceived competence measure

C. Formal research plan has been developed

1. Longitudinal design with repeat measures

a) Various universities and team members engaged in different parts of the research plan

2. Multi-site Research Studies

a) Research plan promoted development and testing of new knowledge and perceived competence measures

b) Multiple sites facilitates evaluation of different ELNEC-UG implementation modalities

III. Conclusion

A. Grassroots collaboration has demonstrated a creative way for researchers and educators to come together

B. Future team directions will be discussed

First Primary Presenting Author

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Author Summary: Dr. Megan Pfitzinger Lippe has been a registered nurse since 2009, and earned three degrees from the University of Texas at Austin. She has taught nursing students since 2011. Dr. Lippe's research focuses on palliative and end-of-life care education. She also has developed and tested multiple high-fidelity simulations, including a withdrawal of care simulation. Dr. Lippe currently has multiple published works in areas related to end-of-life care education and simulation.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

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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.

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Author Summary: Dr. Andra Davis, from Washington State University in Vancouver Washington is passionate about palliative care and education. She has designed and taught electives in palliative care for undergraduate and graduate students, conducted workshops for professional caregivers on compassion fatigue and caring for persons with serious illness, practiced as an Oncology CNS, hospice and palliative care nurse, is an ELNEC trainer, and is conducting research in instrument development and curricular palliative care implementation design.