

Title: Integrating Palliative Care for Oncology Triage Nurses: An Educational Plan

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Problem Statement: Registered nurses are integral interdisciplinary team members who provide ongoing whole person assessment, care coordination, symptom assessment and management, advocacy, and education; yet, often have little palliative care (PC) knowledge and experience. Primary PC should be integrated into nursing school curricula and required as continuing education (CE).

Background: A search of relevant evidence from 2016-2022 was performed using PubMed and CINAHL. Research supported the positive effects of PC education and training on improving nurses' knowledge and building confidence. CE is essential for the clinical nurse to remain current in evidence-based practice and is fundamental for PC nursing practice.

Purpose: This educational initiative determined oncology triage nurses' PC knowledge, learning needs, and challenges to providing primary PC in the after-hours care setting at Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

Methods: A pre-education 7-item survey was developed and administered in May 2022 to understand nurses' learning needs and PC knowledge. Survey results informed the development and presentation of a PC educational intervention. A post-education survey evaluated improvement in PC knowledge and the session's effectiveness.

Results: Fifteen nurses completed the pre-education survey and participated in the educational initiative in July 2022. Pre-education survey data showed that participants wished to learn more about palliative versus hospice care, whole person assessment, and communication with patients and caregivers. Participants (53%) had misconceptions about when to initiate PC; 73% were unaware of current PC community resources. A half-hour didactic, prerecorded PowerPoint training was distributed by email with a link to a post-education survey. Post-survey results suggest nurses' PC knowledge increased from 60%-87%. Nurses' self-reported confidence level with describing PC and having difficult conversations increased from 20%-87%.

Practice Implications: PC education is essential to increasing oncology telephone triage nurses' knowledge and confidence in providing primary PC. A resource list for nurses, patients, caregivers is under development.