

**Title:** Role Definition and Training of Volunteers for an In-Home Oncology Palliative Care Program

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**Problem Statement:** The Shaw Cancer Center developed the Shaw at Home (SAH) Palliative Care Program providing palliative care (PC) for oncology patients with high symptom burden in their homes. The need for a volunteer role for SAH was identified. A volunteer training program was necessary to prepare volunteers with basic knowledge of PC, provide a description of the PC volunteer role, and improve the volunteer's comfort in the PC setting.

**Background:** Limited literature exists describing role and education of in-home PC volunteers. The volunteer role and training are varied across settings. The literature suggested various volunteer roles and training applicable to the SAH program to prepare volunteers.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this program development project is to define the role of the volunteer, develop and provide training to prepare volunteers to work with oncology patients receiving PC, improve volunteer knowledge of PC, and improve comfort as a PC volunteer.

**Methods:** Five volunteers from the community interested in SAH were identified. They completed Vail Health volunteer orientation and training. Additionally, they received three hours of in-person PC training covering six modules (Overview of the SAH program, definitions and differences of PC, home health, and hospice; Roles of the PC team; Communication; Physical, emotional, and spiritual issues; Stress management and self-care; Volunteer role). A six-item survey assessing knowledge and comfort with the PC volunteer role was administered pre/post training.

**Findings:** Survey results indicated a pretraining knowledge deficit and lack of comfort in the six areas of PC content covered by the SAH training. Post training survey results showed an improvement in knowledge and comfort in the role of a PC volunteer.

**Practice Implications:** Volunteers are important members of the SAH interdisciplinary PC team. Developing a training program for PC volunteers increased the knowledge and comfort of volunteers entering their role.