An Innovative Curriculum for Interprofessional Training in Palliative Care

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2001: VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) RFP:

“The clinical need for palliative care within the VA and the nation is so vast that no small number of clinicians could possibly provide all such care. However, trained clinicians can serve key roles beyond direct provision of care as palliative care educators within their respective disciplines and throughout the VA system.”

“The purpose of this VA fellowship program is to develop leaders with vision, knowledge, and commitment to lead palliative care into the 21st century. A comprehensive interprofessional approach to providing palliative care and educating health professionals can result in broadened treatment perspectives and opportunities for implementing change.”
Timeline

March 1, 2002: 6 VA Fellowship Sites Announced

Bronx
Los Angeles
Milwaukee
Palo Alto
Portland
San Antonio

“Although aimed at improving care for veterans, the program will affect how this care – known as ‘palliative care’ in medical circles – is provided throughout the country.”
## Timeline

2002-03: First Cohort Trained  
2017-18: 16th Cohort Training Now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Bronx</th>
<th>Milwaukee</th>
<th>Palo Alto</th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>San Antonio</th>
<th>L.A.</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>
Collaboration Between Sites

- Monthly Directors Meeting
- Annual Report
- Internal Webpage
- Shared Curriculum
Collaboration Between Sites
Shared Curriculum

- Orientation to VA and Hospice & Palliative Care
- Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication
- Ethical/Legal issues
- Quality Improvement
- Physical Symptoms and Disease Processes
- Psychosocial Issues
- Spiritual Aspects of Care
- Cultural Aspects of Care
Portland VA Fellowship

Since 2002:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th># Trained</th>
<th>% now in HPC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Portland VA Fellowship
Enhancing Factors for Interprofessional Experience

- Proximity to each other – shared office
- Daily Team Meetings
- Formal Bedside Rounds
- Informal Bedside Visits
- Weekly Journal Club/Didactics & Interactive Meeting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Symptom Assessment, Heart Failure, Delirium, Neurotoxicity, Emergencies, Pain, Discussing Prognosis, Fatigue, Last Hours of Life, Palliative Sedation, Dyspnea, Dementia, Interventional Pain Techniques, Renal Failure, Addiction Medicine, Radiation Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Working with Families &amp; Caregivers, Decision-Making Capacity, Depression, Grief &amp; Bereavement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Religious Rituals &amp; Practices, Spiritual Assessment, Chaplain’s Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wellness, Quality Improvement, History of Hospice &amp; Palliative Care, Self-Care, 5 Journal Clubs, Teamwork, Pediatrics, Ethical Issues, Physician-Assisted Suicide, Medicare Hospice Benefit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Portland VA Fellowship
Interactive Hour

- Case Presentations – 3 each fellow
- Cultural Presentations – 1 each fellow
- Fast Facts Presentation – 1 each fellow
- Quality Improvement Update – Faculty, quarterly
- Meditation/Reflection – 6 during the year
- Question of the Week – Every week except meditation dates
Portland VA Fellowship
Interactive Hour – Fellows Feedback

Asked to rate activity from 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful)
N=22

- Case Presentations – 4.3 “Too Many” at first
- Cultural Presentations – 4.7
- Fast Facts Presentation – 4.5
- Meditation/Reflection – 4.8
- Question of the Week – 4.8
Portland VA Fellowship
Fellows’ Satisfaction

- Top 3 reasons fellows chose this program:
  1. Opportunity to learn in a VA setting
  2. Exposure to clinical work with Veterans
  3. Reputation of the fellowship program

- Top 3 strongest features of this fellowship program:
  1. Opportunity to care for Veterans and their families
  2. Interprofessional nature of the training
  3. Variety of clinical experiences

- 75% Rate formal teaching as “Excellent” or “Good”

- 100% would recommend this fellowship program to others