

Facts about the Advanced Certification Program for Palliative Care

Launched in September 2011, The Joint Commission's [Advanced Certification Program for Palliative Care](#) recognizes hospital inpatient programs that demonstrate exceptional patient and family-centered care and optimize the quality of life for patients (both adult and pediatric) with serious illness. Palliative care addresses a patient's, physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs and facilitates patient autonomy, access to information and choice.

The Advanced Certification Program for Palliative Care emphasizes:

- A formal, organized palliative care program led by an interdisciplinary team whose members are experts in palliative care
- Leadership endorsement and support of the program's goals for providing care, treatment and services
- A special focus on patient and family engagement
- Processes which support the coordination of care and communication among all care settings and providers
- The use of evidence-based national guidelines or expert consensus to guide patient care

Certification process

On-site certification reviews are conducted by reviewers with expertise in palliative care. The certification decision is based on the evaluation of standards, clinical practice guidelines and performance measurement activities. Palliative care programs that successfully demonstrate compliance are awarded certification for a two-year period. To maintain certification, the cycle repeats with an on-site review conducted every two years and a bi-annual submission of an acceptable assessment of compliance by the organization.

Standards

The standards for palliative care certification are built on the [National Consensus Project's Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care](#) and the [National Quality Forum's National Framework and Preferred Practices for Palliative and Hospice Care Quality](#). Standards and expectations were developed using experts in palliative care and key stakeholder organizations. The standards are published in the 2012 [Palliative Care Certification Manual](#). Chapters address:

- Program management
- Provision of care, treatment and services
- Information management
- Performance improvement

Performance measurement

Certified palliative care programs must use performance measurement to improve care over time. Measures selected by the program or service should be evidence-based, relevant, valid and reliable. Data collection for at least four performance measures is required. At least two of the four measures must be clinical measures related to or identified in practice guidelines for the program. Four months of performance measure data must be available at the time of the initial on-site certification review.

For more information about the Advanced Certification Program for Palliative Care, call (630) 792-5291 or e-mail palliative@jointcommission.org.