

## Partnering for Palliative Care: Improving Quality of Life in Rural Communities



**Cohort:**  
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**Location:**  
Okanogan, Washington

**Focus Areas:**  
End of Life/Late Stage Care  
Health Care Access

### Wicked Problem Description

- Palliative care (PC) is available in urban settings, but rural communities have little or no access to quality, integrated PC. Additionally, people of color face disparities in access to and receipt of PC.
- PC improves quality of life for patients with serious illness & their families while reducing healthcare costs. It does so by addressing the medical, mental, spiritual and social needs of those with serious illness.
- Okanogan County, WA is a huge, poverty-stricken county with higher rates of chronic disease & worse health outcomes compared to the State and the U.S.
- The County's healthcare system is fragmented, which further adversely affects residents struggling with serious illness.
- Multidisciplinary, integrated PC is not currently available in Okanogan County.

## Project Strategies

Our team is dedicated to developing a palliative care clinical service (PCCS) to serve all people in Okanogan County. We are part of a larger team and have support from the WA Rural Palliative Care Initiative, but our proposal is much more ambitious than that of any other region involved in the Initiative: we aim to serve a much larger service area, to collaborate across multiple agencies and settings and to emphasize outreach to subpopulations in our county that face additional barriers in accessing palliative care.