



PARTNERING IN PALLIATIVE CARE – RURAL WASHINGTON

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CLINICAL
SCHOLARS

BACKGROUND

The Okanogan Palliative Care Initiative is building a collaborative network to address shortage of specialized palliative healthcare in rural Washington.

Okanogan County

- 3rd Largest County in Continental U.S.
- Population 41,742
- Poverty Rate = 21.2% vs. Washington = 11%



Wicked Problem

- Population is disproportionately elderly, chronically ill, and impoverished
- Distance to health care services
- Lack of trained providers
- Fragmented healthcare system
- Native American and Latino residents face additional barriers
- Collaborating across 10 agencies—magnifies ‘wickedness’ of problem, but gives opportunity to break down silos and serve ALL residents of Okanogan county



PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care is specialized care that helps relieve the stress and symptoms of serious illness to improve quality of life:

- Addresses the whole person and needs with interprofessional care
- Supports family and caregivers
- Focus is on patient goals
- Allows coordination of care in multiple settings



ACTIVITIES

Clinical Services

- Piloting palliative care services for patients referred from 2 clinics, 1 hospital, and home health agency
- Data collection demonstrates high patient and caregiver satisfaction

Financial Sustainability

- Securing grant funding (secured HRSA and RWJF)
- Developing reimbursement strategies with expert

Provider Training

- Completed graduate programs in palliative care
- Providing palliative care skills training for community providers including EMS

Advanced Care Planning (ACP)

- Providing ACP for community members
- Building network of community ACP facilitators
- Piloting culturally sensitive ACP documents

Community Engagement

- Publishing opinion pieces
- Creating educational videos on palliative care
- Collaborating with local tribal health services

NEXT STEPS

1. Integrating with Family Health Center clinic system as administrative home
2. Develop primary palliative care skills among providers across county
3. Financial sustainability