

Rural Community-Based Palliative Care Program

Asset and Gap Analysis

How to Use This Document

Complete an Asset and Gap Analysis to help identify the resources, needs, and opportunities in the community to develop, implement, and strengthen successful palliative care services. This process will assist with planning and implementing your palliative care program. Complete this with the community palliative care team for it to be most comprehensive and useful.

Services and Processes

The following questions are helpful in assessing the current level of services in your community and identifying potential gaps:

- What types of services are currently available in your community (e.g., home care, hospice care, parish nursing, etc.)?
- Are the identified services provided directly by an organization represented on your community palliative care team?
- What level of expertise does your health care community have in core parts of palliative care (e.g., care management, family conferencing, symptom management, etc.)?
- Where are the biggest opportunities for improving care for the patients you serve in your community (e.g., advance directives, chronic disease case management, referral processes, etc.)?

Population Served by the Community Team

These questions may help determine the need for palliative care services and the potential patient volume in your community, as well as planning and identify resources.

- In which specific health care settings (clinic, hospice, nursing home, home, etc.) within your community do you want to focus your palliative care development efforts?
- Do you wish to target your services to specific patient populations? If so, which?

Background in Palliative Care

These questions focus on the education and experience of palliative care team members.

- Do any of the staff on the palliative care team have certification, training, or previous work experience in palliative care or hospice? If so, which staff, and what training or expertise?
- How much knowledge of palliative care do health care professionals in your broader community have?



Education in Palliative Care

These questions help you focus on the training and preparation of health care professionals in your community related to palliative care.

- Do the organizations on the palliative care community team offer palliative care-related education to staff? To the community?
- What clinical education and training needs does your community team have? Consider topic areas such as advance care planning, interdisciplinary teamwork, symptom management, or understanding family dynamics or support systems. Identify any gaps.
- What support systems are in place for health care professionals in your community to help them avoid burnout and cope with caring for seriously ill people? Consider staff support groups, debriefs and time off.

Quality Mechanisms and Measures

These questions help the community team identify quality measures related to palliative care.

- How would your community team define success, with respect to having a rural community-based palliative care program?
- What data do organizations on your community team currently collect that relate to palliative care needs, and are there any other quality or performance improvement initiatives in your community that might relate to palliative care services?

Barriers to Palliative Care

Discuss potential barriers to palliative care, the degree of impact these barriers may pose in developing a palliative care program, and the factors that drive decisions within your community related to palliative care.

- What various barriers to providing palliative care exist in your community and how extensive are they? Consider barriers such as lack of clinician knowledge or experience of palliative care, reimbursement, or buy-in of medical staff.

Next Steps

- Take the information you have gathered from examining these questions and start developing an action plan.