

# Palliative Care Education in Nurse Practitioner and Doctor of Nursing Practice Programs

Hebert R<sup>1</sup>, Jensen-Seaman K<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Allegheny Health Network, Department of Palliative Care

<sup>2</sup> Forbes Hospice, Allegheny Health Network

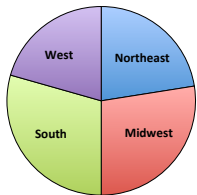
## Introduction:

The Passage of the Affordable Care Act expanded the scope of practice for nurse practitioners within hospice and palliative care allowing them to play an increasingly vital role in the delivery of health care to people at the end of life. As the population of the United States continues to age and die from chronic progressive disease, the role of the nurse practitioner in hospice and palliative care becomes even more important. While research has shown that medical schools are increasing instruction in hospice and palliative care for their students, little research has been done looking at palliative care education in advanced nursing practice programs. This study aimed to answer that question by surveying deans of accredited NP and DNP programs to determine the extent of palliative care education in their curricula.

## Methods:

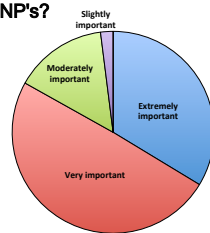
A internet survey was sent via survey monkey to the deans of 376 accredited NP and DNP programs asking them about the current palliative care content in their curricula. A total of 102 deans replied from all regions of the country for a response rate of 27%.

### Location of responding schools

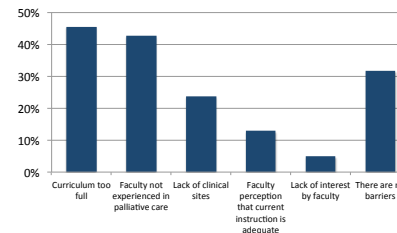


**Results:** An overwhelming majority of advanced nursing practice program deans view palliative care as extremely or very important, but acknowledge barriers exist to including more palliative care content in their curricula.

### How important do advanced nursing practice deans consider palliative care education for NP's and DNP's?

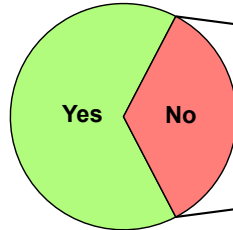


### Which barriers exist to including palliative care education in your curriculum?



**Results:** The majority of NP and DNP programs include palliative care education as part of their curriculum, but over half of those that do not have no plans to add palliative care content in the future.

### Is palliative care education currently part of your NP/DNP curriculum?

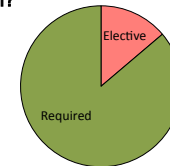


### If not, are there plans to include palliative care education in the future at your school?

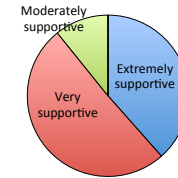


**Results:** The majority of NP and DNP programs require palliative care education in their curricula and most are supportive of making it a requirement, but over half consider their current content too little.

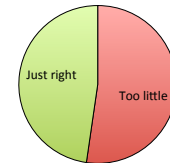
### Is palliative care required or elective in your curriculum?



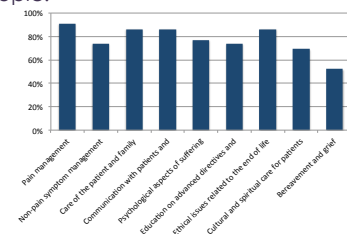
### Are you supportive of requiring palliative care education in your NP/DNP curriculum?



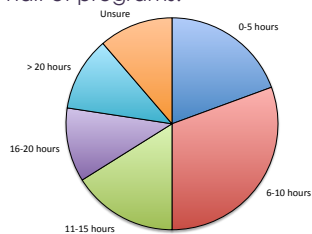
### Do you consider the amount of palliative care education in your NP/DNP curriculum too much, too little, or just right?



**Results:** Pain management is the most frequently taught palliative care topic.



**Results:** Less than 10 hours of palliative care education is offered in half of programs.



**Conclusions:** While a majority of deans (83.2%) view palliative care education as either extremely or very important, barriers continue to exist which are preventing the inclusion of more palliative care topics in the curriculum. In addition, a majority of deans consider the current content too little with half the programs offering less than 10 hours of palliative care education.