The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project is a national education initiative to improve palliative care and is a partnership between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Washington, DC and the City of Hope, Duarte, CA. The project provides undergraduate and graduate nursing faculty, CE providers, staff development educators, specialty nurses in pediatrics, oncology, critical care and geriatrics, and other nurses with training in palliative care so they can teach this essential information to nursing students and practicing nurses. The project, which began in February 2000, was initially funded by a major grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Additional funding has been received from the National Cancer (NCI) and Open Society Institutes, American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), US Cancer Pain Relief Committee, the Aetna, Archstone, Oncology Nursing, California HealthCare, Milbank, Stupski, and Cambia Health Foundations, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

To date, over 22,300 nurses and other healthcare professionals, representing all 50 US states, plus 92 international countries have received ELNEC training through these national courses and are sharing this new expertise in educational and clinical settings. ELNEC Trainers are hosting professional development seminars for practicing nurses, incorporating ELNEC content into nursing curriculum, hosting regional training sessions to expand ELNEC’s reach into rural and underserved communities, presenting ELNEC at national and international conferences, coordinating community partnerships, and improving the quality of nursing care in other innovative ways. It is estimated that since its inception, that ELNEC trainers have returned to their institutions and communities and have trained over 670,000 nurses and other healthcare providers.

**KEY ELNEC FACTS**

- People in the United States deny death, believing that medical science can cure any patient. Death often is seen as a failure of the health care system rather than a natural aspect of life. This belief affects all health professionals, including nurses. Despite their undisputed technical and interpersonal skills, professional nurses may not be completely comfortable with the specialized knowledge and skills needed to provide quality palliative care to patients. The ELNEC project gives nurses the knowledge and skills required to provide this specialized care and to positively impact the lives of patients and families facing serious illness or the end of life.

- The curriculum was developed through the work of nationally recognized palliative care experts with extensive input from an advisory board and reviewers and is revised annually to include new advances in the field, and is modified for each distinct audience. The curriculum focuses on core areas in end-of-life/palliative care reflecting AACN's 2016 Competencies and Recommendations for Educating Undergraduate Nursing Students (CARES), formerly known as Peaceful Death: Recommended Competencies and Curricular Guidelines for End-of-Life Nursing Care (1998). These competencies outline specific aspects of professional nursing care considered requisite for each graduate. Other landmark documents used in the development of the ELNEC curricula include the 2013 National Consensus Project’s (NCP) Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care, the 2013 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report entitled Delivering High Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for System in Crisis and the 2014 IOM Report entitled Dying in America: Improving Quality and Honoring Individual Preferences Near the End of Life, the 2015 Oxford Textbook of Palliative Nursing, and the 2016 Advanced Practice Palliative Nursing Textbook.

- ELNEC includes the following modules: Nursing Care at the End of Life; Pain Management; Symptom Management; Ethical/Legal Issues; Cultural and Spiritual Considerations in End-of-Life Care; Communication; Loss, Grief, Bereavement; and Preparation for and Care at the Time of Death.
• Participants receive a comprehensive 1,000+ page syllabus, palliative care textbook, and a wealth of resources and strategies to teach this content to others. Teaching materials are furnished in hard copy as well as on a flash drive so nurse educators can use them efficiently for their own instructional purposes.

ELNEC PROJECTS

• ELNEC-CORE: Approximately 18,500 nurses and other interprofessional colleagues from diverse clinical backgrounds have been trained to date in this curriculum. ELNEC-Core is used to train staff nurses, advanced practice nurses, undergraduate and graduate nursing faculty, administrators, and researchers who work in acute care settings (i.e., medical-surgical and oncology units), clinics, homecare, hospice and palliative care settings. Several national ELNEC-Core courses are held each year.

• ELNEC-UNDERGRADUATE: Cambia Health Foundation (CHF) has invested funds to develop an innovative ELNEC online curriculum to integrate palliative care in undergraduate nursing education across the nation. The online format means the ELNEC curriculum is equally available to students in rural areas and helps standardize palliative care nursing education. Through the generous funding of CHF, the online ELNEC curriculum, which is available through Relias Learning, is provided to 92 undergraduate nursing programs in Idaho, Utah, Oregon and Washington. The online curriculum is also available to the remaining 46 states for a nominal fee. This new online curriculum debuted January, 2017.

• ELNEC-PEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE: ELNEC-Pediatric Palliative Care by 20 pediatric palliative care experts and piloted in 2003. Each year, at least three national was developed train-the-trainer courses are offered across the US. The curriculum also includes perinatal and neonatal content.

• ELNEC-CRITICAL CARE: This course has been developed for nurses who work in intensive care, coronary care, burn and dialysis units, emergency departments and other clinical areas encompassing critical care. At least two national train-the-trainer courses are offered around the country annually.

• ELNEC-GERIATRIC: With life expectancy increasing and the numbers of aging adults growing each day, the healthcare system in the U.S. and abroad requires nurses to be educated in meeting the palliative care needs of older adults. The ELNEC-Geriatric curriculum addresses the specific educational needs of nurses who provide care to people who reside at home or are being cared for in community-based settings, such as assisted living, nursing communities, skilled nursing settings, hospices, or ambulatory care clinics. Each module captures essential elements of geriatric palliative care that is easy to teach or implement across the continuum of community care settings. Unique features of the course include a focused module on geriatric palliative care that elaborates on physiologic changes in older adults, medications, and chronic conditions using a person-centered approach. Geriatric syndromes are integrated across all 9 modules. Undergraduate and graduate nursing faculty find its supplemental teaching materials and case studies invaluable to their current lectures. In addition, the curriculum includes supplemental teaching strategies for educating unlicensed personnel that work with geriatric patients and their families.

• ELNEC-ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES (APRN): This first course, supported by Cambia Health Foundation, debuted April 4 & 5, 2013 in Anaheim, CA with 115 APRNs, representing 26 states. There are many palliative care teams across the US being led by APRNs and they are key team members who exemplify commitment to their varied roles in not only leadership, but practice, education, and research. Participants receive advanced education in pain and symptom assessment/management and communication. Additional education in palliative care-related finances, budgets, quality improvement, education, and leadership are also provided. Participants can choose to attend one of 2 tracks—adult- or pediatric-focused care.

• INTEGRATING PALLIATIVE ONCOLOGY CARE INTO DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) EDUCATION AND CLINICAL PRACTICE: The ELNEC Project received a 5-year grant for the purpose of educating DNP faculty and clinicians in palliative care. This project, funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), provides education to these
future nursing leaders, as care for those with cancer continues to be complex and financially burdensome. Participants receive resources to assist in integrating evidence-based palliative care content into DNP program curricula and to prepare DNP graduates in providing evidence-based palliative care in a variety of oncology settings. This program is built around the 2013 National Consensus Project’s (NCP) Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care, the 2013 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report entitled Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for a System in Crisis, and the AACC Essentials of DNP Education.

• ELNEC-FOR VETERANS: The ELNEC-For Veterans curriculum is designed to meet the unique needs of nurses caring for Veterans with serious illness. The expertise gained at these courses promises to improve the quality of palliative care for thousands of Veterans in 153 Department of Veterans’ Affairs Medical Centers across the U.S. To date, six national train-the-trainer courses have been held across the US with 745 nurses and other members of the interdisciplinary team in attendance, representing over 200 VA facilities (i.e. medical centers, clinics, CLC’s, etc). Community partners with VA (i.e. homecare, hospice, etc) have attended these courses, too, as they care for many Veterans in various community settings. In 2017, ELNEC-For Veterans was up-dated and is now on the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s (NHPCO) website: [https://www.wehonorveterans.org/elnec-—veterans-updated-curriculum](https://www.wehonorveterans.org/elnec—veterans-updated-curriculum)

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT AND DISSEMINATE ELNEC

While the initial efforts, launched in 2000, were focused in the United States, many ELNEC trainers have had opportunities to travel internationally and provide this education to nurses and other healthcare providers throughout the world. Currently, ELNEC trainers and faculty have traveled to six of the seven continents, representing 91 countries. Many trainers have provided ELNEC educational courses, while others have gone as consultants to work with educators, health administrators, and community leaders to improve care of the seriously ill in their countries. It is estimated that over 25,000 nurses and other healthcare providers have received ELNEC training internationally. Some are working on translating ELNEC into other languages and adapting it to increase the relevance to other cultures. For example, ELNEC has already been translated into Russian, Romanian, and Albanian, where nursing administrators and faculty are using the curriculum in Eastern Europe. ELNEC is also translated in Spanish (Core and Pediatric Palliative Care versions) and is being widely disseminated in Mexico, Central America, and parts of South America. ELNEC-Hindi is being developed to reach nurses throughout India. Lastly, ELNEC-Japanese, ELNEC-Korean, ELNEC-Chinese, and ELNEC-German are available.

Building palliative care leaders has been a major emphasis of the national ELNEC team. To date, 50+ nurses and physicians have attended leadership courses in Romania (2014 & 2015), Kenya (2016), and Hong Kong (2016). For more information on ELNEC trainers’ efforts to disseminate ELNEC internationally and for a listing of efforts by country, go to: [https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/elnec-international](https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/elnec-international).

ELNEC RESOURCES

• Website: The ELNEC project is described in detail at www.aacn.nche.edu/ELNEC. ELNEC Trainers use the complete list of Trainers found on the website by state to locate colleagues with whom to consult and partner. Those outside the ELNEC network can also use this list to contact experts as consultants and instructors.

• Newsletter: The quarterly newsletter, ELNEC Connections is sent to ELNEC Trainers, various palliative care organizations and projects, governmental agencies, and media representatives. ELNEC Connections provides information on palliative care and offers a forum through which the network of ELNEC Trainers can stay in contact and share successful education strategies. The newsletter is available online at [https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/publications/elnec-connections](https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/publications/elnec-connections)

• Publications: Many articles have been written about the ELNEC Project since its inception in 2000. Numerous articles have been published regarding outcomes of various ELNEC courses/curricula. In addition, the ELNEC Project
has been featured in various national and international journals and in electronic publications. For listings of these articles, go to https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/elnec-publications.

• **Awards:** Excellence in ELNEC Education Awards are presented annually to ELNEC Trainers who have made particularly noteworthy contributions to palliative care education. [https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/elnec-award-winners](https://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnec/elnec-award-winners)

• **ELNEC Online:** Since 2007, ELNEC modules have been placed on-line through the Hospice Education Network (HEN). These modules have been presented by national nursing leaders in palliative care. In 2014, Relias Learning, the leader in online learning content and learning management systems for the senior care industry, acquired HEN. In 2014, communication vignettes were videotaped and are now available through Relias, as well as various ELNEC curricula. The vignettes and ELNEC modules (Core, Undergraduate, Critical Care, Geriatric, and Pediatric Palliative Care) are useful teaching tools in schools of nursing, acute care facilities, clinics, hospice, homecare, long-term care and skilled nursing facilities. To obtain more information about these modules go to [http://reliaslearning.com/elnec?utm_source=partner-elnec&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=partner](http://reliaslearning.com/elnec?utm_source=partner-elnec&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=partner)

• **ELNEC on Social Media:** Check out ELNEC on Facebook, Twitter, and You Tube. For more information, go to [www.aacn.nche.edu/ELNEC](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ELNEC)

  *For more information on the ELNEC project, please refer to the website, [https://www.aacn.nche.edu/ELNEC](https://www.aacn.nche.edu/ELNEC) or contact us directly at elnec@coh.org*