End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC)
FACT SHEET

(Updated August 2026)

The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project is a national and international education initiative to improve palliative care. Since 2000, ELNEC has been a collaboration between City of Hope, Duarte, CA and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Washington, DC. In 2026, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) College of Nursing (CON) joined the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) as an official partner. ELNEC has a shared commitment to improve the quality of palliative care in the United States and around the world. The project, administered by City of Hope, 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, practicing nurses and other healthcare professionals.

To date, over **56,581** nurses and other healthcare professionals, representing all 50 US states, plus **150** international countries have completed a national or international ELNEC train-the-trainer course. These healthcare professionals are sharing this new expertise in educational and clinical settings. In addition, over **1279** Undergraduate and **471** Graduate Schools of Nursing and Institutions have accessed the ELNEC Undergraduate/New Graduate and ELNEC Graduate online curricula via Relias, LLC. ELNEC Trainers host 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 ELNEC's inception in 2000, nationally and internationally, **1,844,524** nurses and other health care providers have been educated in ELNEC.

KEY ELNEC FACTS

- 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, nurses and other healthcare professionals may not be prepared with the specialized knowledge and skills needed to provide quality palliative care to patients. The ELNEC project gives nurses and other healthcare professionals the knowledge and skills required to provide this specialized care and to positively impact the lives of patients and families facing serious illness and/or the end of life.

- The curriculum was developed through the work of nationally recognized palliative care experts 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 and 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). In addition, the 2019 *Graduate-CARES* competencies provide a higher level of direction for advanced practice nurses. These competencies outline specific aspects of professional nursing care considered requisite for each graduate. ELNEC content is consistent with the 2018 National Consensus Project's (NCP) *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care.*

- ELNEC includes the following modules: Nursing Care at the End of Life; Pain Management; Symptom Management; Ethical and Legal Issues; Cultural and Spiritual Considerations; Communication; Loss, Grief, Bereavement; and Final Hours/Days.

- Participants receive course materials, such as a syllabus, palliative care resources, and strategies to teach this content to others. Teaching materials and complete curriculum are provided so that ELNEC trainers can use the materials efficiently for their own instructional purposes.

ELNEC CURRICULA

- **ELNEC CORE/CRITICAL CARE**: ELNEC Core/Critical Care is used to educate 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. This course incorporates the special palliative care needs in critical care settings. Several national ELNEC Core/Critical Care courses are held each year, either nationally or regionally.

- **ELNEC ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES (APRN):** There are many palliative care teams across the US being led by APRNs as key team members who exemplify commitment to their varied roles in not only leadership, but practice, education, and research. The first ELNEC APRN course, supported by Cambia Health Foundation, debuted in 2013. Participants receive advanced education in pain and symptom assessment/ management and communication. Additional education in palliative care operations and budgets, quality improvement, education, and leadership are also provided. Participants can choose to attend one of 2 tracks—adult or pediatric focused care.

- **ELNEC COMMUNICATION (INTERDISCIPLINARY): The Foundation of Excellent Practice:** The area of communication has been a key part of the ELNEC curriculum since the project began in 2000 and ELNEC Communication addresses communication in each of the domains including structures and processes of care, physical aspects, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural, end of life care, and ethical aspects of care. It is also an interprofessional curriculum and is presented as a train-the-trainer course with extensive teaching materials, slides and lab sessions designed to facilitate teaching communication principles as well as application through skills-based learning. This course is appropriate for those who work across the continuum of care [neonates to older adults].

- **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, home health agencies, or ambulatory care clinics. Unique features of the course include content that elaborates on physiologic changes in older adults, medications, and chronic conditions using a person-centered approach. Geriatric syndromes are integrated across all 8 modules. In addition, the curriculum includes supplemental teaching strategies for educating unlicensed personnel that work with geriatric patients and their families.

- **ELNEC ONCOLOGY APRN (EOA):** This course was developed in 2017 with a grant from the National Cancer Institute. The purpose of this project is to educate and provide resources to advanced practice nurses who work in oncology settings in an effort to prepare them to be generalists in palliative care. This course offers two tracks: Adults and Pediatrics. The first of five ELNEC Oncology APRN courses was held in 2018. This project was renewed further in March 2023 for another 5 years.

- **ELNEC PEDIATRIC:** ELNEC Pediatric was developed in 2003. Each year, at least two national Train-the-Trainer courses are offered across the United States and is now being taught internationally. The ELNEC Pediatric curriculum also includes perinatal and neonatal content.

- **ELNEC UNDERGRADUATE/NEW GRADUATE:** Cambia Health Foundation has invested funds to develop an innovative ELNEC online curriculum to integrate palliative care in undergraduate nursing education and for new nurse graduates 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. This online curriculum debuted January 2017 and is built on the 2016 American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) *CARES* document: ***C****ompetencies* ***a****nd*

***R**ecommendations for **E**ducating Undergraduate Nursing **S**tudents*. Further information on this program can be accessed at: elnec.academy.reliaslearning.com

- **ELNEC GRADUATE:** Because of the tremendous success of ELNEC Undergraduate/New Graduate, Cambia Health Foundation provided further funding to develop an online curriculum for graduate nursing students in 2018. This curriculum became available September 2019 and is built on the 2019 AACN *Graduate CARES* document, outlining the competencies for both masters and doctoral nursing students. This curriculum will assist future nursing leaders to develop skills in primary palliative care so they can succeed in advanced nursing practice roles in clinical practice, administration, and/or academia. Further information on this program can be accessed at: elnec.academy.reliaslearning.com

- **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 Department of Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers across the U.S. From 2011-2014, six national train-the-trainer courses were 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 as well, as they care for many Veterans in various community settings. In 2023, ELNEC For Veterans was updated and is now on the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's (NHPCO) *We Honor Veterans* website: https://www.wehonorveterans.org/elnec-for-veterans-curriculum/

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT AND DISSEMINATE ELNEC

While the initial ELNEC 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 **150 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. Some are working on translating ELNEC into other languages and adapting it to increase the relevance to other cultures. As of 2020, ELNEC has been translated into 14 additional languages: Albanian, Armenian, Chinese, Czech, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Building palliative care leaders has been a major emphasis of the national ELNEC team. To find an international ELNEC trainer, visit: www.aacnnursing.org/ELNEC/Tools-for-Trainers/Find-a-Trainer and go to the International Trainers tab.

ELNEC RESOURCES

- **Website:** The ELNEC project is described in detail at www.aacnnursing.org/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. ELNEC also created the Schools of Nursing Faculty Corner: https://www.aacnnursing.org/elnec/elnec-faculty-corner to support faculty when using ELNEC Undergraduate and/or ELNEC Graduate curricula. Please include the ELNEC attribution statement on all electronic or printed ELNEC materials as expressed permission to share these materials outside of your organization or online.

- **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/international journals and in electronic publications. For listings of these articles, go to https://www.aacnnursing.org/elnec/publications.

- **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 and one can subscribe to the newsletter at: https://www.aacnnursing.org/elnec/connections

- **ELNEC Online:** Since 2007, ELNEC modules have been available online, developed by national nursing leaders in palliative care. ELNEC curricula (Core, Geriatric, Pediatric, Undergraduate/New Graduate and Graduate) 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, which are available through Relias, go to https://reliasacademy.com/rls/store/online-elnec-training. Note: these are Training courses, not Train-the-Trainer courses. You can find Train-the-trainer courses on our National courses/Summits (Reminder: ELNEC Undergraduate/New Graduate and ELNEC Graduate are also available through Relias at elnec.academy.reliaslearning.com/)

- **ELNEC on Social Media:** ELNEC is on Facebook (/ELNECpalliativecareeducation), Instagram (@elnecpalliativecare), and Twitter (@elnec1). ELNEC is also on LinkedIn and YouTube. Related content can be found under #ELNEC across all social media.

For more information, please refer to the website, www.aacnnursing.org/ELNEC or email elnec@coh.org.