

Implementation of an Interprofessional Training Model in a Post Graduate NP/PA Hospice and Palliative Care Fellowship

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BACKGROUND

Hospice and Palliative Care (HPC) is rooted in interprofessional collaboration to meet the complex needs of patients with serious illness.

Significant parallels in practice exist for HPC physician and advanced practice providers (APP); however, post graduate training programs for APPs in HPC pale in comparison to HPC physician training programs.¹

Access to HPC physicians is expected to decline over the next 15 years as the population ages and HPC physicians retire. Experts suggest this gap may result in a shift of responsibility to non-physician HPC specialists, including APPs.²

Less than 5% of HPC APRNs complete fellowship training and those who do not report feeling unprepared as they begin their career in HPC.¹

Interprofessional education (IPE) research suggests that IPE training structures enhance the quality of patient care as a result of teamwork and collaboration by an interprofessional team.³

Studies suggest that clinicians who seek IPE training formats are driven to learn in a collaborative setting³, a key value necessary for practice in HPC.

One contemporary research study suggests that integration of APP fellows into established ACGME HPC physician fellowship programs does not threaten the quality or outcomes of accredited physician HPC training.⁴ Furthermore, graduates of an IPE HPC fellowship reported the IPE structure a strong point of the program.

In July 2022, the HPC fellowship at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, successfully integrated two APP fellows into the well-established 12-month ACGME accredited physician HPC training program. All fellows completed the required research, practice, and educational endeavors as a single fellowship class while upholding ACGME program requirements and the HPNA Core Competencies for physicians and APPs, respectively.



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PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Define the Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify anticipated valley in HPC workforce Identify anticipated HPC APP staffing challenges in setting of anticipated practice growth Appraise post-graduate training data as it relates to program completion and APP competency, in addition to impact on initial employment onboarding Appraise interprofessional training data as it relates to outcomes and attitudes of trainees who participate in an IPE training format
Assess Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review financial implications with practice and institutional leadership Compare/contrast institutional post-graduate training program requirements with anticipated HPC APP fellowship curriculum Assess current state of practice as it pertains to capacity for integration of two APP fellows across practice sites
Poll Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce proposed APP fellowship to current HPC APP to assess attitudes, concerns, and preceptor educational needs Meet with APP co-director of each clinical practice site to assess learner climate and unique APP education site needs Shadow at each practice site to understand unique practice function to align rotation structure
Design Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify core competencies outlined by HPNA and compare/contrast to ACGME program requirements for HPC physician fellowship Review current physician curriculum and compare/contrast to unique APP educational needs Prepare for potential need for additional training sessions for APP learners through dedicated 2:1 time with mentor or program leadership Incorporate formal quarterly touchpoints with program leadership to discuss strengths and challenges of training format to allow real-time adjustment of program/curriculum to meet educational needs of all trainees
Evaluate Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop evaluation standards through enmeshment of the ACGME & HPNA Core Competencies Quarterly meeting between each APP fellow and PD to review evaluations and set educational goals End of year program review with fellows to review feedback of program, IPE structure

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Curriculum Design Incorporates the 3 Shields of Mayo Clinic: Research, Education and Practice

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Quality Improvement project as a single fellowship class Completion of clinical and translational research curriculum Monthly journal club meetings with geriatric co-fellows: each fellow required to review and lead discussion of two contemporary articles from peer-reviewed journals
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal didactic offerings encompassing subspecialty components of care B-monthly meeting with staff APP and APP fellows to review complex HPC cases Two half-day simulation lab sessions focused on complex symptom management and communication encounters Attendance at AAHPM Annual Assembly and PallTalk Communication workshop
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotate through core HPC service lines: consult service, inpatient unit, clinic, hospice Participate in up to 6 weeks of elective opportunities (ie: Palliative Homebound team, Medical and Radiation Oncology, Chronic Pain Clinic, Ethics, Scholarship, etc.)

OUTCOMES

Successful fellowship completion was attained by all five fellows at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year.

Positive feedback from first interprofessional fellowship class (enjoyed collaboration across disciplines, enhanced appreciation and respect for different disciplines):

"I have been beyond impressed with this program and would recommend it to any APP interested in HPC."

"There are so many strengths about the program I really enjoyed having the program combined with the physicians. I think this gave both parties good perspective about the roles."

Second interprofessional HPC fellowship class began training on July 1, 2024.

CHALLENGES

July 1 start date, which aligns with the ACGME academic year, is challenging for recruitment of new APP graduates.

Nationally and institutionally, recruitment challenging due to the changing landscape of APP employment following the COVID-19 pandemic. 2023-2024 HPC fellowship class did not include APP due to recruitment challenges

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