



2026 Caring Beyond Cure: Cultivating Excellence in Pediatric Palliative End-of-Life Care

October 6, 2026

7:30 AM – 4:15 PM

Hillsdale Conference Center, Charlottesville, VA

Overview

This pediatric end-of-life care conference will address compassionate communication, symptom management, cultural and ethical considerations, family support, grief, interdisciplinary teamwork, and strategies to improve quality of life for children with life-limiting conditions and their caregivers.

Target Audience:

Allied Health Professionals, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and all other members of the healthcare team.

Desired Outcomes

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Describe the core roles and collaborative practices of a high-functioning interdisciplinary pediatric palliative care team.
- Demonstrate effective, developmentally appropriate communication techniques for engaging children and families in pediatric palliative care conversations.
- Contrast general pediatric palliative care practices with the care that is needed for families during the perinatal and neonatal periods when a grave diagnosis is made.
- Describe evidence-based approaches for assessing pain and other distressing symptoms in children receiving palliative care, including age-appropriate communication and validated assessment tools.
- Integrate culturally responsive and spiritually sensitive approaches into clinical assessment, care planning, and interdisciplinary collaboration for children and families.
- Apply ethical frameworks and legal requirements to clinical scenarios involving conflicts, uncertainty, or complex care decisions for children and families.
- Implement evidence informed approaches to symptom management, communication, and family support during the dying process in pediatric palliative care.
- Apply evidence informed strategies to support grieving children and families, including communication approaches and referral pathways for ongoing bereavement care.

Agenda

7:30 AM	Check-in & light breakfast refreshments	
8:00 AM	Team-Based Pediatric Palliative Care Nancy Littlefield, DNP, RN, FACHE, & Novella W. Thompson, MBA, MA, ALM-C, FACHE This session provides an overview of specialized palliative and end of life care services for families and children facing life limiting illness.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to :

	Special consideration is given to the importance of coordinated team-based approaches to care. Specific roles will be reviewed, and strategies for effective collaboration will be highlighted.	• Describe the core roles and collaborative practices of a high-functioning interdisciplinary pediatric palliative care team. • Describe at least two strategies for effective collaborative approaches that support the quality of life of children facing life-limiting illnesses and their families.
8:30 AM	Communication in Pediatric Palliative Care– Part 1 Dana Racette, BSN, RN This session prepares clinicians to communicate clearly, compassionately, and effectively with children and families in pediatric palliative care, incorporating guided practice with session facilitators to build confidence in developmentally appropriate dialogue and shared decision-making during emotionally complex moments.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Demonstrate effective, developmentally appropriate communication techniques for engaging children and families in pediatric palliative care conversations. • Apply communication strategies during emotionally complex clinical encounters.
9:15 AM	Supporting Patients and Families at the Time of Death Carolyn Spilman, MS, RN, CPNP This session prepares clinicians to provide compassionate, developmentally sensitive, and family-centered care at the time of a child's death, addressing symptom management, communication, and support for families and the care team during the dying process.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Implement evidence-informed approaches to symptom management, communication, and family support during the dying process in pediatric palliative care.
10:00 AM	Break	
10:15 AM	Pain & Symptom Management Joy Miller, DNP, MBA, APRN, CPNP-PC, CHPPN This session will provide evidence-based strategies for assessing, treating, and alleviating pain and distressing symptoms in children receiving palliative care.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Describe evidence-based approaches for assessing pain and other distressing symptoms in children receiving palliative care, including age-appropriate communication and validated assessment tools. • Apply current best practices for managing complex pain and

	symptom burdens in pediatric patients through pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic, and interdisciplinary strategies that support both the child and family.	
11:45 AM	Lunch (provided)	
12:15 PM	Providing Culturally Sensitive Pediatric Palliative Care Carolyn Spilman, MS, RN, CPNP This session equips clinicians to recognize how cultural values, belief systems, and spiritual practices influence pediatric patients' and families' experiences in palliative care, and to integrate this understanding into compassionate, culturally responsive clinical decision-making and communication.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Describe how cultural values, belief systems, and spiritual practices influence communication, decision-making, and care preferences in pediatric palliative care. • Integrate culturally responsive and spiritually sensitive approaches into clinical assessment, care planning, and interdisciplinary collaboration for children and families.
12:45 PM	Ethical and Legal Issues in Pediatric Palliative Care Alina Fomovska, MD, HEC-C This session guides clinicians through the ethical and legal complexities of pediatric palliative care, focusing on decision-making, consent and assent, best-interest standards, and navigating conflicts while upholding the rights and well-being of children and families.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Explain key ethical and legal principles that guide decision-making, consent and assent, and best-interest determinations in pediatric palliative care. • Apply ethical frameworks and legal requirements to clinical scenarios involving conflicts, uncertainty, or complex care decisions for children and families.
1:15 PM	Special Considerations: Perinatal and Neonatal Palliative Care Noreen M. Crain, MD Perinatal and neonatal palliative and end-of-life care is highly specialized. This session provides an overview of perinatal and neonatal palliative care, emphasizing best practices for supporting families when a life-limiting diagnosis is identified during pregnancy or after birth.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: • Contrast general pediatric palliative care practices with the care that is needed for families during the perinatal and neonatal periods when a grave diagnosis is made.

		Describe the unique communication needs for families related to providing perinatal and neonatal palliative care.
2:00 PM	Break	
2:15 PM	Beyond the Bedside: Grief and Bereavement Care Panel presentation: Nancy Littlefield, DNP, RN, FACHE, Moderator, Jennifer Cline, PhD, LPC, ACS, NCC & Teresa Haase, PhD, LPC, ACS This session helps clinicians understand and respond to the unique expressions of loss, grief, and bereavement experienced by children and families in pediatric palliative care. Attention is given to addressing individualized spiritual needs, developmentally informed support and compassionate, family-centered practices.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: - Describe the developmental, familial, spiritual and cultural factors that shape how children and families experience loss, grief, and bereavement in pediatric palliative care. - Apply evidence-informed strategies to support grieving children and families, including communication approaches and referral pathways for ongoing bereavement care.
3:15 PM	Communication in Pediatric Palliative Care – Part 2 Dana Racette, BSN, RN This session deepens clinicians' communication skills in pediatric palliative care by focusing on advanced techniques for navigating uncertainty, facilitating complex family dynamics, and supporting shared understanding across interdisciplinary teams.	At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: - Analyze advanced communication challenges in pediatric palliative care, including navigating uncertainty and complex family dynamics. - Apply refined communication strategies to promote shared understanding and effective collaboration within interdisciplinary care teams.
4:00 PM	Closing remarks and Evaluate to Claim Credit Nancy Littlefield, DNP, RN, FACHE	
4:15 PM	Adjourn	



An electronic syllabus will be provided to all who register for the conference. See [the conference website](#) for additional information and resources.

Requirements for Successful Completion of the Course: Conference participants requesting credit are required to complete the post-activity evaluation for the conference sessions in which they participate.

Faculty & Planning Committee (* denotes planning committee member)

Nancy Littlefield, DNP, RN, FACHE, Course Director, Hospice of the Piedmont President & Chief Executive Officer*

Jennifer Cline, PhD, LPC, ACS, NCC, Pediatric and Family Grief Counselor, Hospice of the Piedmont

Noreen M. Crain, MD, School of Medicine Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Pediatrics Critical Care, UVA Health

Alina Fomovska, MD, HEC-C, UVA Health Emergency Medicine, Hospice of the Piedmont Chief Medical Officer

Mina S. Ford, MSN, RN, NPD – BC, Hospice of the Piedmont Director of Education*

Teresa Haase, PhD, LPC, ACS, Director of Bereavement Services, Hospice of the Piedmont

Joy Miller, DNP, MBA, APRN, CPNP-PC, CHPPN, Nurse Practitioner, Advanced Practice Provider Manager, Pediatric Palliative Care, UVA Health Children's

Dana Racette, BSN, RN, Hospice of the Piedmont Hospital Nurse Liaison *

Kathryn Reid, PhD, RN, FNP-C, UVA School of Nursing Associate Professor of Nursing, Director, School of Nursing Continuing Education*

Novella W. Thompson, MBA, MA, ALM-C, FACHE, Asst Chief, Population Health Department, Population Health, Post-Acute Care, & Continuum Home Health, UVA Health

Carolyn Spilman, MS, RN, CPNP, Pediatric Palliative Care, Bon Secours Noah's Children, Richmond, VA

Linda L. Hanson, MSM, UVA School of Nursing Continuing Education Program Manager*

Registration (closes September 30th, 2026)

Registration and payment are available through [direct link](#).

Register by midnight, September 30, 2026. No walk-in registration accepted.

Registration Fees

Fee

Attendees

\$95

UVA Employees, Hospice of the

\$65

Piedmont Employees, UVA SON Students



Accreditation and Designation Statement



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In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by UVA Health Continuing Education and the Hospice of the Piedmont. UVA Health Continuing Education is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Nurses

UVA Health Continuing Education awards up to **7.0 contact hours** for nurses who participate in this educational activity and complete the post activity evaluation.

Hours of Participation

UVA Health Continuing Education awards **7.0 hours of participation** (consistent with the designated number of ANCC contact hours) to a participant who successfully completes this educational activity.

UVA Health Continuing Education maintains a record of participation for six (6) years.

Questions? Contact sonce@virginia.edu.



Hospice of the Piedmont, the oldest and most experienced hospice in the region, has provided expert, compassionate comfort care and symptom management to tens of thousands of terminally ill patients since 1980. We pride ourselves in companioning those who are dying, family members and friends who are caring for their loved ones, and those who are grieving.