

NHPCO Project ECHO *Equity Where It Matters*

Key Takeaways: Supporting Patients Experiencing Housing Insecurity at the End of Life

September 28, 2023

Key points:

- Many low-income and unhoused/housing insecure individuals' mistrust govt/social services- and also have mistrust of healthcare.
- Thinking outside the box to build trust with community partners like end-of-life doulas or Community Health Workers can improve quality of life and continuity of care.
- Housing is healthcare - this is a great place to start to improve a person's quality of life.

Actionable Steps:

- Consider political advocacy around Medicaid Waiver and expediting supports for dying persons.
- Consider incorporation of end-of-life doulas into your programs to potentially bridge some caregiver gaps, provide respite, ease burden of care for hospice teams, and improve comfort and quality at end of life.
- Ensure that your team is utilizing all disciplines to provide interdisciplinary care to unhoused patients – ensure robust social work support
- Perform early advanced care planning, including safety planning and funeral plans
- Offer as many options as possible to allow patient to retain control
- Explore opportunities to perform home repairs that may allow patient to stay at home safely

Conversation Starters:

1. What networks and respite facilities exist in your community for individuals who need shelter at the end of life?
2. To build trust in your organization, what community connectors/service providers can be partners?
3. How might you incorporate an end-of-life doula program in your organization?

Participant Perspectives:

- Consider patient's right to self-determination versus risk of harm. Consult ethical codes and councils for guidance in circumstances where it is unclear whether a patient is safe.
- It's important to give patients as much control as we can give.
- Be careful to avoid assuming what the patient's wishes are – complete careful assessments.



References:

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- Webb, W. A. (2015). When dying at home is not an option: exploration of hostel staff views on palliative care for homeless people. *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 21(5), 236-244.
- NHPCO Access and Inclusion - <https://www.nhpc.org/resources/access-and-inclusion/>
- *Hospice Through the DEI Lens: A Research Study Identifying Barriers to Hospice Care in Underserved Communities*, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.
- NHPCO Diversity Tools and Resources <https://www.nhpc.org/education/tools-and-resources/diversity>
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>
- CMS Framework for Health Equity <https://www.cms.gov/about-cms/agency-information/omh/health-equity-programs/cms-framework-for-health-equity>

