



Michigan Rural Community-Based Palliative Care Recommendations

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State Policy

- Establish a state-level palliative care advisory task force to develop comprehensive strategies for defining palliative care, expanding access to palliative care, enhancing training (including mandatory continuing education for health professionals), raising public awareness, and integrating palliative care services into community health programs.
- Advocate for revisions to Senate Bill 1180 to ensure the proposed advisory task force includes meaningful representation from rural communities, particularly individuals with firsthand knowledge of the unique challenges in these areas and promotes a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates diverse healthcare perspectives.
- Develop standardized metrics to assess the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of palliative care services, with specific benchmarks for rural areas to monitor and address gaps in service delivery.

Technology Support

- Support the expansion of broadband infrastructure by leveraging the Michigan Broadband Roadmap and collaborating with federal and state initiatives to bridge the digital divide in rural areas.
- Promote digital literacy initiatives by providing culturally sensitive resources, coaching, and tutorials tailored to the specific needs of rural patients and caregivers, empowering them to navigate telehealth platforms with confidence.
- Incentivize collaborative efforts to build partnerships with community organizations and vested partners to improve technology access and literacy, enabling seamless interactions between palliative care teams, patients and their families.

Payment Environment

- Advocate for Medicaid policy changes to recognize and include palliative care as a core covered benefit, ensuring sustainable reimbursement for essential services such as home-based palliative care, counseling, and symptom management.
- Advocate for state-level telehealth reimbursement policies that explicitly include palliative care services, eliminate geographic restrictions, and allow audio-only visits to ensure accessibility for patients in underserved rural areas who may lack reliable internet access.
- Ensure Medicaid reimbursement models include coverage for virtual visit and telehealth services with provisions that prioritize flexibility for rural patients and providers.

- Explore policy enhancements to provide financial support for caregivers, including family caregivers, with a particular focus on addressing the unique challenges in rural settings.

Community Awareness

- Launch tailored public education campaigns to highlight the benefits of palliative care, emphasizing its role in improving quality of life.
- Implement community initiatives to educate the public about advanced directives, offering resources that are easily accessible and explained in plain language and leveraging local organizations and healthcare facilities to disseminate these resources.
- Partner with trusted community leaders and local champions to lead efforts to raise awareness and encourage the adoption of palliative care initiatives.
- Develop adaptable materials for social media campaigns, print resources, and community workshops, ensuring they address the unique needs of rural populations, with careful consideration of cultural relevance and accessibility.

Workforce Training

- Partner with colleges and universities to integrate palliative care modules into the curricula of medical, nursing, social work, and allied health programs, with a focus on preparing students to address the challenges of providing care in rural settings.
- Strengthen healthcare providers' ability to deliver palliative care through practical guidance, mentorship programs, and rural-specific training initiatives, and integration into existing practices, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of rural patients and families.
- Leverage existing loan forgiveness programs, scholarships and partnerships with federally qualified health centers and rural healthcare organizations to attract and retain health professionals to palliative care roles in rural communities.