

# Module 1

## Introduction to Palliative Nursing Care

### Module Overview

This module creates the foundation for the ELNEC curriculum. It is an overview of the need to improve palliative care for Veterans and the role of the nurse as a member of an interprofessional team in providing quality care. Basic definitions and principles of hospice and palliative care are presented within a quality of life (QOL) framework.

### Key Messages

- VA has made a commitment to improve and advance palliative care for all Veterans and their families.
- Veterans may experience unique end-of-life issues.
- Social, cultural, and economic forces influence care provided at the end of life.
- There are gaps in current interprofessional systems of care for Veterans and families at the end of life across venues and settings of care.
- There are opportunities for enhanced collaboration among interdisciplinary systems of care for Veterans and families at the end of life.
- Families of Veterans may have unique bereavement issues.
- Nurses should not work in isolation, but rather as partners in collaboration with physicians and members of other disciplines.
- Caring for the dying means not only “doing for” but also “being with.” Palliative nursing care combines caring, communication, knowledge & skill.

### Objectives

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the role of the nurse in providing quality palliative care for Veterans across the lifespan and health settings
2. Identify the role of collaboration within interprofessional team members while implementing the nursing role in palliative care.
3. Recognize how health disparities, population demographics, healthcare economics, and service delivery necessitate improved professional preparation for palliative care.
4. Describe the philosophy and principles of hospice and palliative care that can be integrated across settings to affect quality care for Veterans with serious illness,
5. Discuss aspects of assessing physiological, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and social domains of quality of life for Veterans and families facing serious illness.