



Mercy Health

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Mercy Palliative Care Strengthening Palliative Care Through Volunteer Training and Cross-Sector Collaboration

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BACKGROUND

Volunteers play a vital role in community palliative care, offering social support to patients and families. Growing a volunteer workforce requires structured training, recruitment strategies, and collaboration across sectors. With the support of other community organisations, Mercy Palliative Care has developed an innovative volunteer training program that supports its own volunteers as well as those from other organisations.

AIM

This initiative aims to enhance the sustainability of community palliative care volunteer programs by equipping volunteers with the necessary skills to support patients and themselves while in this type of work.

METHODS

- Development of a structured volunteer training program, adaptable for different organisations
- Collaboration with community groups to recruit and engage new volunteers
- Integration of research on the role of volunteer social support in community palliative care¹
- Ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness and volunteer experiences

CONCLUSION

Sustaining the community palliative care workforce requires a collaborative approach that values and invests in volunteer programs. By training volunteers across organisations we can enhance the quality of care and ensure the availability of compassionate support for patients and families.



Why This Work Matters

A sustainable and well-trained volunteer workforce is essential for delivering high-quality community palliative care. Volunteers provide emotional, social, and practical support that enhances patient and family well-being. We know many organisations struggle with training. By developing a structured volunteer training program and collaborating across sectors, Mercy Palliative Care is helping to bridge this gap. This initiative demonstrates how connecting community palliative care with community organisations can strengthen the sustainability of volunteer support in community palliative care.

References

1. The effectiveness of community-based palliative care programme components: a systematic review M.Courtney Hughes Erin Vernon, Allison Hainstock