

# PALLIATIVE CARE (MS)

## Overview

The Master of Science Degree in Palliative Care along with the Interprofessional Graduate Certificate in Palliative Care aim to ease suffering worldwide for those patients and families living with serious illness through exemplary palliative care education.

These programs develop Palliative Care Community Specialists through innovative educational pedagogies designed to facilitate learning for healthcare providers and allied health professionals in up-to-date, evidence-based, interdisciplinary palliative care concepts using an online virtual learning environment that offers flexible application-based approaches.

Program courses are delivered in an interprofessional learning environment that mirrors the palliative care work setting. The program focuses on advancing clinical knowledge; developing clinical wisdom; building an evidence-based palliative care practice; enhancing communication skills; and addressing physical, psychological, social, and spiritual suffering.

## Admission Requirements

**Priority Deadline: April 1**

**DOMESTIC APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 1**

**INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 1**

To apply for admission applicants must submit the following:

- **Online Graduate School application-** select “school, program” to get to the right app
  - **Personal Statement:** A one-page personal statement describing the applicant’s career goals and purpose for studying palliative care.
  - **Resume:** The applicant’s current resume or curriculum vitae, including professional work/practice since graduating with a bachelor’s degree (or equivalent).
  - **Three recommendations:** to be completed by people who know your professional, academic and/or personal achievements or qualities well. As such, references must be from professional contacts, such as employers, supervisors, former faculty, preceptors, or professional colleagues. References from clergy, family members, friends or politicians will not be accepted. The contact information for these recommendations will be put into the application system.
- **Application Fee:** \$50 (domestic), \$75 (international).
- **Interview:** After the application is complete a telephone or video interview will be arranged with the applicant and two faculty/administration members. This interview will afford the program the opportunity to understand the needs of the applicant and for the candidate to ask questions. The interview process is designed to assess the applicant’s knowledge of the profession, communication, and ability to perform in a positive, professional manner when working with others. To be considered for admission, applicants must participate in the interview process.
- **Transcripts:** All official transcripts from all post-secondary colleges and/or universities attended must be submitted (even if a degree was not obtained). If courses show on a transcript from a transfer

institution, the official transcripts from the transfer institution must still be submitted.

Preferred Delivery Method:

Electronic Transcripts should be sent to:  
graduate.school@cuanschutz.edu

If sending a physical transcript, please mail to:

Graduate School  
Mail Stop C296  
Fitzsimons Building, W5107  
13001 E. 17th Place  
Aurora, CO 80045

## Degree Requirements

### First Year

First Year		Hours
<b>Fall</b>		
PALC 6510	Palliative Care Core Concepts - Principles, & Communication	3
PALC 6110	Basic Pain Assessment & Management: IDT Care	3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
PALC 6210	IDT Care for Symptoms: Part A	3
PALC 6220	IDT Care for Symptoms: Part B	3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Summer</b>		
PALC 6520	Communication Skill Refinement: IDT Collaboration	3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>15</b>

### Second Year

Second Year		Hours
<b>Fall</b>		
PALC 6310	Advanced Illness in Special Settings: Part A	3
PALC 6320	Advanced Illness in Special Settings: Part B	3
PALC 6910	Systems Topics: Preparation to Capstone	3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
PALC 6330	Advanced Illness in Special Settings: Part C	3
PALC 6120	Advanced Concepts in Pain Management	3
PALC 6950	Capstone Project	3
<b>Hours</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>18</b>

## Learning Objectives

### Communication Skills

The PC Community Specialist demonstrates expertise in relationship centered communication theory and skills to gather and share information, negotiate shared decision making and plans of care, and sustain relationships with palliative care patients/families and healthcare providers.

### Expert Symptom Management Skills

The PC Community Specialist demonstrates expert clinical judgment in performing a comprehensive patient assessment, leading to diagnosis development, implementation, and ongoing reassessment with modification of effective, evidence-based care plans utilizing the skills and expertise of the interdisciplinary team (IDT), for all distressing symptoms experienced by patients with any serious illness.

### Ethics, Advocacy, and Legal Aspects of Care

The PC Community Specialist incorporates knowledge of ethical and legal aspects of palliative care into practice by exhibiting the highest professional standards and by advocating for the rights of patients/families to access optimal palliative care.

### Spiritual, Religious and Existential Aspects of Care

As part of the IDT, the PC Community Specialist demonstrates and promotes spiritually sensitive care, respecting diversity in all forms, for patients/families and other health care professionals.

### Social and Cultural Aspects of Care

As part of the IDT, the PC Community Specialist demonstrates respect for diverse communities through culturally sensitive skills, recognizing how social and economic barriers and challenges impact the delivery of health care services.

### Psychological Aspects of Care

As part of the IDT, the PC Community Specialist effectively addresses psychological concerns, and promotes access to expanded resources for all patients/families living with any serious illness.

### Integration of Palliative Care for patients throughout the course of any serious illness in all venues

The PC Community Specialist effectively advocates to provide evidence-based palliative care for patients/families and supports and develops expanded resources for all patients/families living with any serious illness.

### Effective Palliative Care Educator

The PC Community Specialist demonstrates knowledge, skills, and applies adult learning principles when providing palliative care education to patients, families, healthcare professionals, and the community.

### Systems Thinking

The PC Community Specialist demonstrates understanding of the healthcare system to effectively manage and utilize resources to support patients/families living with any serious illness and advocates for the reform of healthcare systems to provide optimal palliative care.

## Courses

### *PALC 6510 - Core Concepts, Principles & Communication Skills (3 Credits)*

Online. Mostly asynchronous, includes a synchronous online 3-day intensive held in late September. Topics include: communication skills (introduction/building rapport), philosophy/integration of PC, whole person assessment, the meaning of illness, spirituality in PC, resilience, goals of care conversations, decision-making capacity, and narrative medicine. Online synchronous intensive covers topics including: interdisciplinary teams, ethics, the role of PC community specialist, resilience, and communication assessment.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6110 - Basic Pain Assessment & Management: IDT Care (3 Credits)*

Online. Asynchronous. Topics include: pain pathophysiology, assessment, integrative approaches, non-pharmacological interventions, and non-opioid and opioid pharmacological pain management, pain and anxiety, safe use of opioids and non-opioids, confidentiality, quality of life assessment, suicidal ideation, the social stigma of opioids, mindfulness, and family systems.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6210 - IDT Care for Symptoms: Part A (3 Credits)*

Online. Mostly asynchronous, includes two synchronous communication sessions. Topics include: assessment and management of hematologic/metabolic/structural emergencies, depression, nausea/vomiting, fatigue, delirium, dysphagia, and GU issues, PTSD, grief, mental status exam screening, financial issues and sexuality concerns. Communication skill building and assessments for family meetings.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6220 - IDT Care for Symptoms: Part B (3 Credits)*

Online. Asynchronous. Topics include: assessment and management of skin issues, insomnia, GI symptoms, anorexia, liver dysfunction, dyspnea, cough, and care of the imminently dying, autonomy/dignity, group process, family conflict, caregiver issues, hastened death, and euthanasia.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6520 - Communication Skill Refinement: IDT Collaboration (3 Credits)*

Online. Asynchronous with a synchronous intensive held the first weekend in August. Topics include: leadership, the business of PC, value proposition, ethics, spiritual care and PC, communication training, and humanities. Capstone project presentations.

Prerequisite: PALC 6510 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206510>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6310 Advanced Illness in Special Settings: PART A (3 Credits)*

Online. Asynchronous. Topics include: palliative care in the home/community/long-term care, rural setting, and telehealth, PC in cardiology, neurology, pulmonology, and the pediatric population. Emphasis on early PC combined with disease-focused therapy. Attention to prognostication and transitions into palliative/hospice care or discontinuing treatments including bioethical review, survivorship, ethical challenges in new technology, media relations, and advocacy, diversity/equity/inclusion in PC communication.

Prerequisite: PALC 6510 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206510>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

### *PALC 6320 - Advanced Illness in Special Settings: Part B (3 Credits)*

Online. Asynchronous. Topics include: PC in the inpatient setting, prenatal/newborn populations, vulnerable populations, geriatrics, and global PC, chronic illness, advance care planning, powerlessness, child grief, decision-making, and existential suffering.

Prerequisite: PALC 6510 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206510>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

***PALC 6330 - Advanced Illness in Special Settings: Part C (3 Credits)***

Online. Mostly asynchronous, includes two synchronous communication sessions. Topics include: assessment/management of end-stage renal and liver disease, malignancies, care for the cognitively impaired, and sudden death/trauma in the pediatric population, prognostication and transitions into palliative/hospice care, ethics at end of life, parenting issues, sibling grief, spiritual struggles, relationship issues, and final communication assessment.

Prerequisite: PALC 6510 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206510>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

***PALC 6120 - Advanced Concepts in Pain Management (3 Credits)***

Online. Asynchronous. Topics include: methadone, opioid infusions, interventional pain management, and other complex modalities, pain in the face of addiction, MAiD, compassion fatigue, pediatric and adolescent ethical challenges, and public policy around opioids and REMS. Final synchronous resiliency project presentation

Prerequisites: PALC 6110 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206110>) and 6510 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206510>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Capstone Course Descriptions

***PALC 6910 - Systems Topics: Preparation to Capstone (3 Credits)***

Online. Asynchronous with some synchronous mentoring/presentations. Topics include: palliative care research, quality improvement, health care policy and advocacy and palliative care program development including institutional needs assessment and program planning, instruction to become a PC educator, development of professional resilience and role of medical humanities.

Prerequisite: PALC 651 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206511>)0

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

***PALC 6950 - Capstone Project (1-3 Credits)***

Online. Asynchronous with some synchronous mentoring/presentations. Topics include: Master of Science in Palliative Care Capstone Project design, implementation, evaluation, and presentation the result of a research, QI, education, advocacy, or medical humanities project during year 2 with mentorship from faculty.

Perquisites: PALC 6910 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206910>) and PALC 6520 (<https://catalog.ucdenver.edu/search/?P=PALC%206520>)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Please refer to the Graduate School Policies page (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-anschutz/schools-colleges-programs/graduate-school/#policiestext>).

## Contact Us

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