

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is this project about?

This project focuses on developing measures to assess how well palliative care doctors and their teams help patients with serious illness get the care they want and need.

Palliative care teams may include doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists, and other health care professionals. These teams help patients with serious illness, such as cancer, heart disease, kidney disease and others, by treating challenging physical and emotional symptoms, for example, pain, shortness of breath, nausea, anxiety and more.

These measures will help doctors, teams, health systems and insurers understand how well palliative care teams are helping patients and how to make care even better.

Who is leading this project?

The [American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine](#) (AAHPM) is leading this project. AAHPM helps doctors, nurses, social workers and other healthcare professionals learn about palliative care and how to make it better.

AAHPM is also partnering with a group of researchers at [RAND](#), a nonprofit policy research organization, and the [National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care](#), who advocates for improving care for people with serious or life-threatening illnesses and their families. The project team is also supported by consultant experts from SEA Healthcare and American Institutes for Research.

To ensure that new measures will be meaningful to patients with serious illness and their families and caregivers, the project team partnered with people who have experienced serious illness or cared for a family member or loved one with serious illness. They also partnered with representatives from national organizations representing doctors, nurses, chaplains, other palliative care team members and patient advocacy.

What is the project team doing?

The project team is developing **two measures** to assess the quality of care provided by palliative care teams working in doctor's offices and clinics that asks patients:

1. *How much they felt heard and understood, and*
2. *How much they got the help they wanted for pain.*

To test the proposed measures, the project team sent a survey to around 7,500 patients receiving care at over 40 doctor's offices and clinics participating in the project and received over 3,700 completed surveys. The team will use the responses from surveys to calculate:

- the percent of patients who felt heard and understood, and
- the percent of patients who got the help they wanted for pain.

The focus on palliative care in doctor's offices and clinics is one of the special features of this project. Other patient-reported measures exist or are being developed for palliative care delivered at home or in the hospital, however, these will be the first developed for palliative care in doctor's offices and clinics.

Who will this project help?

This project will help patients by offering a way to share feedback about the care they receive. The measures developed by this team will also help patients learn where they can get the highest quality care.

In addition, doctors, teams, health systems and insurers need to understand how well the care they provide meets patients' needs and preferences. The measures will help palliative care teams and the health systems they work in improve the care they provide to their patients.

How will this project help?

The [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that administers the nation's major healthcare programs. CMS uses measures in programs to improve, report on, and pay for the quality of care. CMS plans to use these measures in a national program to help doctors and care teams improve the quality of care they provide.

The project team is working closely with an advisory group of doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists, patients, family members, and others to ensure the measures focus on what matters most to patients and are useful for palliative care teams.

Ultimately, the project aims to help palliative care teams provide the best quality of care for all people living with serious illness, their families and their caregivers.

How you can be involved!

- **Attend a free webinar** to learn about the project and measures:
February 1, 2021, 2-3 pm, ET
- **Give your feedback about the measures** during a public comment period:
February 1-March 1, 2021
- **Sign up to receive more information and project updates**
(by [subscribing](#) to a bimonthly e-newsletter)

Learn more at www.nationalcoalitionhpc.org/MACRA; email macra@nationalcoalitionhpc.org.

This project is supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services (CMS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$5.5 million dollars over three years with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. This funding was through a cooperative agreement between CMS and AAHPM from 2018 to 2021. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.