

The Growth of Palliative Care in U.S. Hospitals

2015 Snapshot (2000–2013)

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness—whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses, and other specialists, who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and can be provided along with curative treatment.

Palliative care improves health care quality in three significant ways:

- Relieves physical and emotional suffering
- Strengthens patient-family-physician communication and decision making
- Ensures well-coordinated care across health care settings

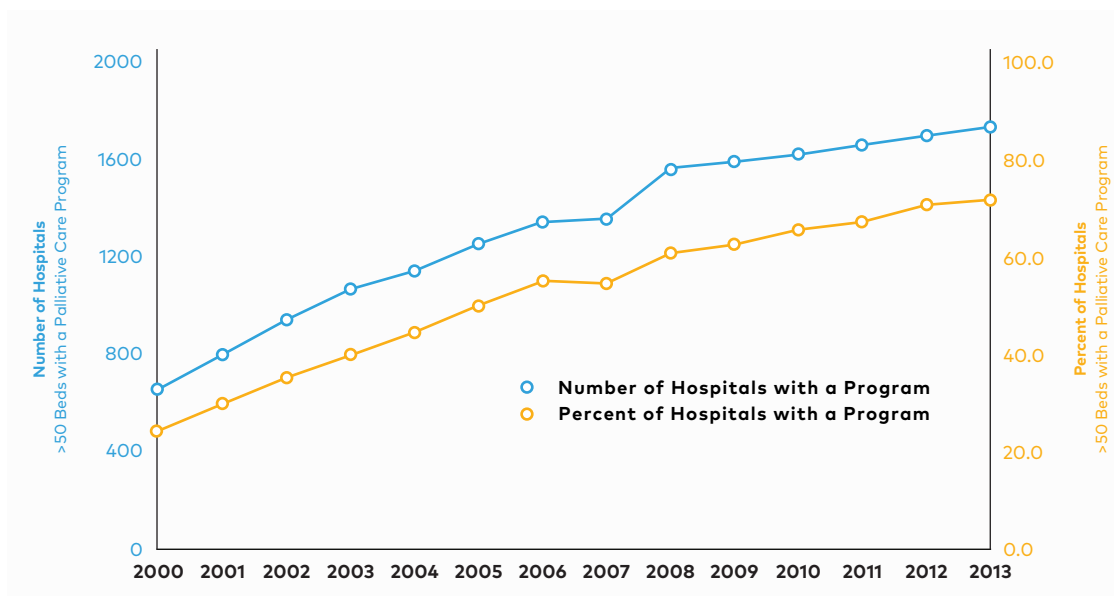
Data Sources

1) American Hospital Association (AHA) Annual Survey Database™, FY 2000–2013. Chicago, IL: Health Forum, an American Hospital Association affiliate, and 2) the National Palliative Care Registry™, a project of the Center to Advance Palliative Care and the National Palliative Care Research Center.

Methodology

The AHA Annual Survey asks hospitals to self-report the presence of a palliative care program at their hospital. In 2008, the AHA survey expanded to include inpatient palliative care units. Hospitals that participated in the National Palliative Care Registry™ are included in the 2008–2013 figures regardless of their participation in, or response to, the AHA Annual Survey. For the same time period, children's general medical and surgical hospitals are also included. For this report, all counts for 2008–2013 were recalculated to ensure consistent definitions across years.

CHART Palliative Care in US Hospitals with 50 or more beds, 2000–2013



Palliative care prevalence in U.S. hospitals has shown a steady increase since 2000.

In 2000, just 24.5% (658) of hospitals with more than 50 beds reported palliative care programs; in 2013, 72.3% (1,744) of such hospitals reported a program.

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