

Experts in pediatric palliative care to discuss challenges in this emerging field

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When children are facing a life-threatening illness, bringing in palliative medicine specialists can help both the child and family improve the child's quality of life, for however long he or she lives.

Over the past decade, pediatric palliative care has emerged as a recognized medical specialty, including a subspecialty certification from the American Board of Medical Specialties and a certification from the Joint Commission for hospital palliative care programs.

In a two-hour seminar at 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 15 at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference & Exhibition in Boston, experts will discuss current challenges in this growing field, including building partnerships between hospitals, pediatricians and hospice services, and how to improve funding to promote better quality of care.

"Pediatric palliative care represents a paradigm shift that makes sense in the way we care for children and families," said Sarah Frieibert, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Section on Hospice & [Palliative Medicine](#) and director of the Haslinger Pediatric Palliative Care Center at Akron Children's Hospital. "Significant gaps still exist, but recent growth in research initiatives, program development, and academic support are extending this comprehensive care to more and more children with serious illness. National recognition, including endowed chairs in pediatric palliative care recently announced in Ohio and Florida, will continue to transform lives."

Beginning at 3 p.m. a one-hour poster presentation will include seven research abstracts in palliative medicine, including examples of programs in different parts of the country.

"One of the most fundamental roles of a pediatric palliative care team is to bridge the care of the child between hospital and community," said Joanne Wolfe, MD, FAAP, director of pediatric palliative care at Children's Hospital Boston, and division chief, Pediatric Palliative Care, at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, who will be presenting at Saturday's seminar. "In Massachusetts, we have worked together with the department of public health to develop a pediatric palliative care program which is now in its fifth year, and is still growing. Hundreds of children with serious illnesses and families are being served in their homes, truly an amazing state-wide partnership."

Members of the AAP Section on Hospice and Palliative Medicine will also be available to discuss hospice and [palliative care](#) programs in their communities, and how these developments have affected the care that children and their families are receiving.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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