

## **Pediatric Palliative Care**

### Clinical Service:

The Pediatric Palliative Care Service, formally established in March 2002, serves principally as a consult service for patients throughout the UVA Children's Hospital. The service assists the primary team to explore palliative care goals and prioritize treatment plans for children and families with a potentially life-limiting condition. Palliative care is a multidisciplinary practice that addresses pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual support of the patient and family, and an approach to treatment that delineates goals of care with respect to the patient's life plan and prognosis and chooses therapies that further those goals. The physician members of the service are Susan Alisanski, MD and Noreen Crain, MD.

During this academic year, the team provided care to seventeen patients and their families, not including consulting work with the adult palliative care service for adult cancer patients with young children. Typically the work of this service includes inpatient consults, team discussions and family meetings throughout the Children's Hospital, discharge planning assistance, consultation and referral to hospice agencies, consultation with community pediatricians and home visits as indicated.

### Advocacy:

The members of the division work closely with hospice agencies in the region that enroll children in their programs. They are also involved in advocacy efforts on behalf of children with local hospice agencies not yet enrolling children to promote and encourage appropriate care measures for children and families.

### Research:

The field of pediatric palliative care is relatively young, and the opportunities to contribute knowledge are extensive. The division has presented needs-assessment data from a UVACH-sponsored project at a national meeting and to the department as a whole. There are several additional projects underway designed to share our patient and family experiences and pose national health policy questions. There is an academic affiliation and collegial relationship with the Palliative Care division in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Virginia, providing opportunities for enrichment and parallel research efforts.

### Education:

A curriculum in pediatric palliative care has been written and distributed by the Education Development Center and the Initiative for Pediatric Palliative Care (IPPC). The medical director of the division is a national faculty leader within IPPC and participates in national seminars and teaches at regional retreats around the country that employ this curriculum. The division has provided regional sessions on pediatric palliative care with continuing education credit. The division is responsible for structured didactic sessions on palliative care and end-of-life care for fellows, residents and medical students. Members of the team give scheduled seminars and didactic sessions for nursing and respiratory therapy staff. Most importantly, the division nurtures the opportunities for numerous bedside discussions throughout the Children's Hospital that promote thoughtful consideration of palliative care principles. The education mission of the division will continue to flourish as the clinical service expands, as the collective expertise in the field recommends an agenda for trainees and for continuing education, and as the empirical knowledge in the field grows and reveals important themes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Noreen Crain, MD