



NEEDS-PC trial: promoting access to inpatient palliative care



What?

An NIH-funded clinical trial being conducted in partnership with the MedStar Health Research Institute and the Palliative and Advanced Illness Research (PAIR) Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Why?

Promote evidence-based delivery of inpatient palliative care consultation for hospitalized adults with any serious illness (at any stage and treatment intent) and unmet palliative care needs to improve the patient-centeredness, quality, and outcomes of care.

Where?

9 MedStar Health acute care hospitals. See table.

Who?

Hospitalized individuals ≥ 18 years of age with ≥ 1 acute or chronic serious illness and multiple unmet palliative care needs documented during the hospital stay. Examples of unmet palliative care needs include uncontrolled pain or symptoms, recent acute care utilization, frailty, and functional or cognitive impairment. Patients on any inpatient service line may meet study eligibility criteria, except those on observation status, rehabilitation or SNF, psychiatry or addiction, obstetrics and neonatal services.

How?

Alert providers in the EHR that an inpatient palliative care consult is recommended (Alert #1) or that one has been ordered by default with the option to opt-out (Alert #2). Hospitals will transition from no alert (usual care) to Alert #1 in a randomly determined order, and then after 6 months, each hospital will transition to Alert #2. The alerts will fire (7A-7P) for the patient's primary attending physician and, if designated a primary team role in the EHR, house staff, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

When?

Patients can meet study eligibility criteria any time after 24 hours length-of-stay of the current hospital stay.

Hospital Go-Live Dates:

Hospital	Alert #1 Go-Live Date	Alert #2 Go-Live Date
MHH	October 8, 2025	April 15, 2026
MFSMC	December 10, 2025	June 17, 2026
MMMC	February 11, 2026	August 19, 2026
MWHC	April 15, 2026	October 21, 2026
MSMH	June 17, 2026	December 23, 2026
MGUH	August 19, 2026	February 24, 2027
MGSJ	October 21, 2026	April 28, 2027
MUMH	October 21, 2026	April 28, 2027
MSMHC	December 23, 2026	June 30, 2027

Contact us:

For questions or comments, please contact us at NEEDS-PC@medstar.net

For more information, please visit MedStarHealth.org/NEEDSPCTrial



It's how we treat people.