



# To Be Or Not To Be...

## That is the Specialty Hospice and Palliative Care Certification Question


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A CENTURY STRONG  
**100 South Dakota**  
Association of Healthcare Organizations

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## SD Definition

"Palliative care," specialized medical care that is provided to a patient of any age, with a serious illness at any stage, and which:

- (a) Is designed to improve a patient's quality of life, and that of the patient's family, by providing relief from the symptoms and stresses of the patient's illness;
- (b) May be provided alongside curative treatments in primary and specialty settings, based on the needs of the patient and not on the prognosis; and
- (c) Delivered collaboratively, in any setting, by a specially trained interdisciplinary team that includes healthcare practitioners, nurses, social workers, spiritual care providers, and other patient support providers;

SDCL §34-12-1.1(13)



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## Why SD Needs Specialty PC

### South Dakota Palliative Care Specialists:

Discipline	Number of Specialty Trained
Fellowship Trained MD/DO*	19
Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurses (ACHPN)**	12
Advance Palliative and Hospice Social Workers Certified (APHSW-C)**	2
Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Social Worker (AHP-SW)***	?
Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse (CHPN)**	32
Certified Hospice and Palliative Licensed Nurse (CHPLN)**	4
Certified Hospice and Palliative Nursing Assistant (CHPNA)**	1
Certified Hospice and Palliative Pediatric Nurse (CHPPN)**	0
PA	??
Pharmacist	??
Chaplain	??

\*American Board of Medical Specialties 2024-2025 ABMS Board Certification Report

\*\* Hospice and Palliative Credential Center as of 2/20/26

\*\*\* National Association of Social Workers

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## Why SD Needs Specialty PC

### Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) 2024 Serious Illness Scorecard

CERTIFIED PRESCRIBERS PER 100,000

**Findings:**  
There are 26 certified prescribing palliative care providers\* in SD resulting in 2.9 per 100,000 residents in SD. This capacity is likely insufficient to meet the needs in our state.


\*MD and NP- no data on DO or PA

Category	Count
Physicians	16
APPs	10

<https://scorecard.cape.org/state/south-dakota/>

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## Why SD Needs Specialty PC


### SD Serious Illness by the numbers:

2025 Cause of Death	Rank	Number
Heart disease	1	1,586
Cancer	2	1,567
Alzheimer's disease	3	409
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	4	402
Stroke	5	389
Chronic Liver Disease	7	216
Dementia	11	156
Kidney disease	14	103
Parkinson's disease	15	90

<https://doh.sd.gov/media/rqanhmxi/mortality-report-2025-provisional-november.pdf> (on 2/20/2026)

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## Why SD Needs Specialty PC

### SD Serious Illness by the numbers:

Diagnosis by Codes	Number of Medicaid Recipients w/ 1 or more claims during 2020-2024
ALS	29
Alzheimer's Disease	2,217
Breast Cancer (Advanced: stage 3-4)	287
Colon Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	166
COPD	13,268
Dementia	5,988
Heart Failure	14,472
HIV/AIDS	331
Huntington's Disease	34
Liver Disease	5,827
Lung Cancer (Advanced: stage 3-4)	334
Multiple Sclerosis	594
Ovarian Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	47
Parkinson's Disease	5,670
Prostate Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	266
Pulmonary Fibrosis	75
Renal Disease (Severe- stages 4,5, and End)	3,040

Public Records Request obtained through SD DSS 9/2025


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## Why SD Needs Specialty PC

SD Serious Illness by the numbers:

Diagnosis by Codes	Medicaid Recipients 2024	ED Claims	ED Recipients	IP Claims	IP Recipients
ALS	6			14	1
Alzheimer's Disease	804	186	108	5,540	561
Breast Cancer (Advanced: stage 3-4)	118	37	19	76	24
Colon Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	52	33	13	56	17
COPD	5,846	6,826	2,175	12,269	2,264
Dementia	2,214	988	493	13,156	1,479
Heart Failure	6,477	9,290	2,715	15,747	3,157
HIV/AIDS	223	144	46	100	32
Huntington's Disease	17	8	3	28	4
Liver Disease	2,379	4,284	1,081	3,534	999
Lung Cancer (Advanced: stage 3-4)	113	118	42	114	45
Multiple Sclerosis	351	282	101	1,335	145
Ovarian Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	9	0	0	8	3
Parkinson's Disease	2,313	945	449	5,363	816
Prostate Cancer (Advanced: Stage 3-4)	109	31	9	105	22
Pulmonary Fibrosis	24	1	1	2	2
Renal Disease (Severe- stages 4,5, and End)	1,293	3,214	586	3,059	622

Public Record Request obtained from SD DSS 10/2025



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## Professional Commitment to Specialty Certification

- Commitment to the field of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
- Utilization and commitment to evidence-based practice
- Collaboration and growth along side specialty colleagues
- Refining and development of new skills and knowledge
- Recommitment to excellence and expertise in the area of practice
- Increased competence and confidence in practice
- Recognition of expertise



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## Differences Between Specialty and Primary Palliative Care

### Primary Palliative Care


- According to SDAHO “Care provided by practitioners who are not specialty trained in palliative care like internists, family practice doctors, specialists like oncologist, cardiologist or any other practitioner who cares for someone with a serious illness. They have basic skills that allow them to provide basic symptom management, review code status and goals of care conversations, and smooth transitions to hospice. Primary palliative care providers may or may not have an interdisciplinary team to help support the patient and support person(s)”

### Specialty Palliative Care

- According to SDAHO “Provided with a core interdisciplinary team that may consist of a physician, advanced practice practitioner, registered nurse, social worker, pharmacists and chaplain, all who can have special certification in palliative care and hospice care. They specialize in complex symptom management and difficult discussions about code state, goals of care or transitions to hospice care, and/or challenging patient/family dynamics.”




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## Primary Palliative Care Education

### Primary Palliative Education and Certificates

- Integrated palliative care education in undergraduate and graduate healthcare programs
- Education directed at the needs of healthcare providers in any healthcare setting
- Certificate programs with emphasis on primary palliative care skills



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## Specialty Certification vs. Specialty Education

### Specialty Certification

Examinations that require educational preparation (eg: graduate education or course work), required clinical practice hours w/in palliative care and a profession specific exam that covers scope of practice w/in that profession

### Specialty Education:

Stand Alone education or courses taken as part of achieving certification:

- Certificate Education
- Academic Certificate Program
- Degree Program



Dahlin, C. (2025, September 3). *Interprofessional specialty palliative care education programs in the United States* (Center to Advance Palliative Care). Center to Advance Palliative Care. <https://www.capc.org/documents/download/1268/>

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## Interdisciplinary Specialty Palliative Care Training

Training is structured clinical experience to practice specialty palliative care.

### Types:

- **Immersion Programs**- intensives which offer both education and opportunities for clinical observation and mentoring
- **Residencies**- Broadly defined as enhanced clinical training after academic preparation
- **Fellowships**- One year, post graduate training programs in a specialty

Dahlin, C. (2025, September 1). *Interprofessional specialty palliative care training in the United States* (Center to Advance Palliative Care). Center to Advance Palliative Care. <https://www.capc.org/documents/download/1269/>



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## What's available? NP Certification

The Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse through the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Advanced Certified  
Hospice and Palliative  
Nurse



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/achpn/>



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## APRN Certification Requirements

- Hold a current, active APRN license or APRN certification
- Completion of an accredited graduate, postgraduate, or doctoral Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) educational program.
  - An official or unofficial academic record/transcript showing graduate degree and date conferred is required as part of the application process. The transcript must demonstrate the key elements of APRN preparation
- NP or CNS with hospice and palliative advanced nursing practice of 500 hours in the most recent 12 months or 1000 hours in the most recent 24 months prior to applying for the exam.



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## Exam Details

- 175 multiple choice items
  - 150 equal weight for scoring
  - 25 nonscored “pretest” or “trial” items that are interspersed throughout
- Four Focus Areas: Assessment and Data Collection, Interventions and Management, Education and Communication, and Professionalism and Practice
- Cost: \$355 HPNA members \$515 for non-members



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## What's available? RN Certification

- The Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse through the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Certified Hospice and  
Palliative Nurse



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/chpn/>



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## RN Certification Requirements

- Current, active, unrestricted RN license
- minimum of 500 hours of hospice and palliative nursing practice in the last 12 months
- Alternatively, 1,000 hours of experience in the past 24 months



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## Exam Details

- 150 multiple choice questions (135 scored 15 unscored)
- Candidate has 3 hours to complete
- Eight focus areas: Assessment and Planning, Pain Management, Symptoms Management, Support and Advocacy, Practice Issues
- Cost: \$305 HPNA members \$445 for non-members



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## What's available? LPN Certification

- The Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse through the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Certified Hospice and  
Palliative Licensed  
Nurse



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/chpln/>



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## LPN Certification Requirements

- Current, active, unrestricted LPN license
- minimum of 500 hours of hospice and palliative nursing practice in the last 12 months
- Alternatively, 1,000 hours of experience in the past 24 months



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## Exam Details

- 150 multiple choice questions (135 scored 15 unscored)
- Candidate has 3 hours to complete
- Eight focus areas: Assessment and Planning, Pain Management, Symptoms Management, Support and Advocacy, Practice Issues
- Cost: \$260 HPNA members \$365 for non-members



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## What's available? Social Work Certification

- The Advanced Palliative Hospice Social Worker-Certified through the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Advanced Palliative  
Hospice Social  
Worker - Certified



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/aphsw-c/>



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## SW Certification Requirements

- [Hospice & Palliative Credential Center \(HPCC\)](#)

Advanced Palliative Hospice Social Worker- Certified (APHSW-C®)

- BSW or MSW from CSWE accredited school
- BSW- 3 years post-degree supervised experience in hospice &/or palliative w/in the previous 5 years. Supervision by MSW or licensed professional experienced in H/PC (2,000 hrs=1yr)
- MSW- 2 yrs post degree experience in Hospice &/or PC w/in the previous 5 yrs
- Attest to practicing in accordance with National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics
- Licensed in the state based on educational level and type of practice- in good standing



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## SW Exam Details

- 150 multiple choice questions (135 scored 15 unscored)
- Candidate has 3 hours to complete (ADA accommodations available)
- Four focus areas: Assessment & Re-evaluation (25), Planning & Intervention (50), Death, Grief, & Bereavement (28), Professionalism (32)
- Cost: \$435; HPNA, SWHPN, The Alliance for Care at Home members: \$295; reTEST Assured \$135





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## Specialty Social Work Re-Certification

- [Hospice & Palliative Credential Center \(HPCC\)](#)
- Advanced Palliative Hospice Social Worker- Certified (APHSW-C®)
  - 4-year certification Period
  - 60 Hospice and Palliative Accrual for Recertification (HPAR) points to renew
  - Types accepted:
    - CE- no max- 50% approved by acceptable accrediting organization
    - Scholarly Accomplishments
      - Academic education- 45 pts
      - Prof. Presentations- 30 pts
      - Prof. Publications- 75 pts
    - Professional Contributions
      - Precepting Students- 30 pts
      - Orienting Staff- 20 pts
      - Volunteer- 30 pts
  - Maintain License, work in H/PC 500 hrs most recent 12 months/1,000 past 24 months
  - Cost: Members: \$250 early bird/\$360 Standard Non-Members: \$360 early bird/\$500 Standard

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## Specialty Social Work Certification

### [National Association of Social Workers- NASW](#)

#### Advanced Certified Hospice & Palliative Social Worker (ACHP-SW)

#### Certified Hospice & Palliative Social Worker (CHP-SW)

- MSW from CSWE accredited school/**BSW from CSWE accredited school**
- Documented 2 yrs post degree supervised experience in Hospice &/or PC/**4,500 hours, w/in last 5 yrs, supervised by MSW 1hr/wk**
- Attest to practicing in accordance with National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics
- Licensure in the state based on educational level and type of practice- in good standing
- Cost: \$165 members/\$450 non-members (NASW or NCHPP)**\$140 mem/\$350 non**
- Renewal: 20 CE directly related to specialty practice every 2 years- 3 in ethics




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## Specialty Pharmacy Certification

### American Society of Hospital Pharmacy (ASHP)

**Residency (30 programs)** Full-time educational experience post graduate year 1 required common experience in common practice areas (geriatrics, peds, acute care, community care, pain, etc)

### Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS)

A division of the American Pharmacist Association (APhA) that recognizes 16 distinct pharmacy specialties which include:

- BCPMP (Board Certified Pain Management Pharmacy)
- BCOP (Board Certified Oncology Pharmacy)

(Both of these certifications include Palliative care in the training and testing to receive certification)



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## Specialty Pharmacy Certification

### Specialty PC Education Programs

- Interdisciplinary Academic Certificate Programs: CAPC, ASHP
- Interprofessional Masters in Palliative Care: Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, PA/NP, Social Work, Chaplaincy & more (ie: University of Maryland School of Graduate Studies)
- Certificate programs w/in a degree program (i.e. U Pitt PharmD program, et. al. with Certificates for PC or Geriatrics)

### Supportive Organizations with Memberships for Pharmacists

- Offer education, CE and Mentorship for PC/Hospice practicing pharmacists
- [Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists](#) (SPPCP), ASHP, [American College of Clinical Pharmacy](#) (ACCP)
- [American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine](#) (AAHPM)
- Institutional Memberships like the [Center to Advance Palliative Care](#) (CAPC) and [The Alliance for Care at Home](#) (formerly NHPCO)



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## What's available? PA Certification

Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in Palliative Medicine and Hospice Care (PMHC) through the [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](#)



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## PA Certification Requirements

Current PA-C Certification

- Valid, unrestricted License to practice as a PA in at least 1 jurisdiction in the US/territories
- Specialty Specific CME-75 CME Category 1 in the preceding 6 years including 25 credits w/in the last 2 years
- 2,000 hours of experience in hospice &/or PC w/in 6 years of the date of application
- Attestation from a physician or Sr. PA or post grad program director who works in the specialty w/in 90 days of receiving your CAQ score



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## PA Certification Requirements

- Pass the PMHC CAQ exam- 120 Multiple choice questions related to hospice and PC for Pas
- PMHC CAQ is valid for 10 years
- Continue to meet the same PA-C and Licensure requirements
- Earn at least 125 credits of Category I CME focused on the specialty



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## What's available? Chaplaincy Certification

- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC); Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc (BCCI) Board Certified Chaplain-Palliative Care & Hospice Advanced Certification (BCC-PCHAC)
- The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) Palliative Care and Hospice Advanced certification (PCHAC)



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## Chaplaincy Certification Requirements

- Understanding & practice in all 8 domains of the National Consensus Project on Palliative Care
- 1-2 pg. Essay- describe work setting
- 10-12 pg. Major Essay-3 required components (theory & practice; case presentation; QI demonstrating 14 competencies)
- 3 letters of Reference
- Board Certified through BCCI for a min. 1 yr
- Direct clinical practice in PC/Hospice spanning 3 years @ 520 hr. min./yr.
- Complete an intensive PC &/or Hospice course-equivalent to 3 credit hrs. (45 hours)
- Interview (NACC)



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## Chaplaincy Certification Cost & Renewal

- **APC:**
  - \$467/APC member or \$572/ APC non-member
  - 20 hrs specific CE in PC/Hospice annually + BCC Peer Review (other discipline) + Fees
- **NACC:**
  - \$425 application fee- \$250 renewal fee every 5 years+ BCC Peer Review (other discipline) + Priest/Superior LoR + Ecclesiastical Endorsement + Education
  - Activity for each year in the 4 competency areas- no specific number- must demonstrate growth



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## Specialty Chaplain Certification

### Spiritual Care Association

#### Hospice and Palliative Care Specialty Certification (APBCC-HPC)

Advanced Practice Board Certified Chaplains (APBCC) who also complete a standardized test of core knowledge in hospice and palliative care

- Pass the APBCC-HPC version of the Standardized Clinical Knowledge Test
- Pass the Simulated Patient Exam
- 45 hours of hospice/palliative care training.
- 2,000 working hours in palliative care/hospice services over no more than 3 years and accrued since the conclusion of your second unit of CPE
- \$430 application/test fee/\$110 retake fee; \$195 annual renewal fee for credential/BCC; Recertification every 5 years @ \$100 per test



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## Additional Specialty Certification

**Certified Hospice and  
Palliative Nursing  
Assistant**



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/chpna/>

**Certified Hospice and  
Palliative Pediatric  
Nurse**



<https://www.advancingexpertcare.org/hpcc/credentials/chppn/>



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# Questions?



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# References

1. Dahlin, C. (2025, September 1). *Interprofessional specialty palliative care training in the United States* (Center to Advance Palliative Care). Center to Advance Palliative Care. <https://www.capc.org/documents/download/1269/>
2. Dahlin, C. (2025, September 3). *Interprofessional specialty palliative care education programs in the United States* (Center to Advance Palliative Care). Center to Advance Palliative Care. <https://www.capc.org/documents/download/1268/>



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