



BY  
 Pallium Canada

# The Palliative Care ECHO Project Semi-Annual Report

December 2024



## Palliative Care ECHO Project: Semi-Annual Report

Welcome to the seventh semi-annual report on the Palliative Care ECHO Project.

### About the Palliative Care ECHO Project

The [Palliative Care ECHO Project](#) is a national initiative led by Pallium Canada in collaboration with its 13 Hub Partners located across Canada. It serves as a catalyst for cultivating communities of practice and fostering continuous professional development among health care providers dedicated to caring for patients with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

The Palliative Care ECHO Project offers a wide variety of free ECHO programs on both a national, provincial, and regional level. Through this innovative program, participants gain access to specialized training, interdisciplinary support, and evidence-based resources, empowering them to deliver high-quality palliative care.

## **Palliative Care ECHO Project highlights**

### Five years of continuous learning with the Palliative Care ECHO Project

We are in the fifth year of the Palliative Care ECHO Project—a journey driven by passion, purpose, and a commitment to building local capacity across Canada to provide a palliative care approach to patients and their families.

Since its launch, the Palliative Care ECHO Project has brought together thousands of learners in over 480 webinars, creating more than 27,000 learning encounters and drawing over 31,000 views of webinar recordings.

Together with our partners, we have built a unique, national platform that fosters continuous professional development and empowers health care professionals with practical knowledge that they can use to improve palliative care for patients.

## The World's Largest Palliative Care ECHO Session

On October 18, 2024, the Palliative Care ECHO Project hosted the World's Largest Palliative Care ECHO Session simultaneously online and in-person at the McGill International Palliative Care Congress in Montreal.

This event brought together over **1,100 attendees** from **94 countries**, making it the **largest** Palliative Care ECHO Session ever held. To accommodate the international community, live interpretation was offered in six languages—French, Spanish, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, and Brazilian Portuguese.



We were honoured to be joined by internationally renowned experts, who shared their knowledge, experiences, and innovative practices in palliative care.

- **USA:** Aparna Gupta, DNP, EMBA, FACHE, CPHQ, ANP-BC
- **United Kingdom:** Lesley Goodburn, person with lived experience
- **Brazil:** Dr. Luís Fernando Rodrigues, MD, MAHR Palliative Care
- **India:** Dr. Sreedevi Warriar
- **Canada (Quebec):** Dr. Olivia Nguyen, MD, MM, CCMF(SP), FCMF, FRCPC, Palliative Medicine
- **Spain:** Dr. José Pereira, MBChB, CCFP (PC), MSc, FCPC
- **Kenya:** Sarah Nyariki, RN, Bsc

Thank you to Dr. Sanjeev Arora, MD, MACP, Director of Project ECHO, who joined us to share an in-depth look at the power and impact of Project ECHO around the world, and Jeffrey Moat, CM, CEO of Pallium Canada, for moderating the event.

The impact of this event emphasizes the need for equitable care for all and highlights the critical role of education and collaboration in improving care for people with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

### **Missed the live event?**

You can still [watch the webinar recording, and access the resources and Q&A here.](#)

## **What does palliative care mean to you?**

As part of the World's Largest Palliative Care ECHO Session, we asked individuals from around the world to share what palliative care means to them in a 10 second video. We invite you to view this inspiring global video montage, which featured stories that illustrate the universal importance of compassionate care.

[Watch the video now.](#)

## Hub Partners updates

Hub Partners are at the heart of the Palliative Care ECHO Project and are critical to the creation and delivery of ECHO programs that will meet the needs of their learners. Through the leadership of these amazing organizations, existing programs and resources can reach more learners and new programs can be rapidly developed, shared, and deployed to fill gaps.



## Introducing our new Hub Partner

Our network of Hub Partners continues to grow, as we welcome the [Canadian Indigenous Nursing Association](#) to the Palliative Care ECHO Project.



- **Canadian Indigenous Nursing Association** – The mission of the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association (CINA) is to improve the health of Indigenous Peoples, by supporting Indigenous Nurses and by promoting the development and practice of Indigenous Health Nursing. As a Hub Partner, CINA will bring together Indigenous nurses, health care professionals and palliative care specialists from across Canada for discussions centered on the unique palliative care needs of Indigenous communities.

The addition of this new Hub Partner represents a significant milestone in the continued spread and scale of the Palliative Care ECHO Project and underscores our commitment to fostering a space for collaboration, learning, innovation, and excellence in palliative care across Canada.



## Program updates

Over the past six months, Pallium and its Hub Partners have run several high-impact programs.

### Communities of practice and series

The Palliative Care ECHO Project delivers the majority of its content through national, provincial, and regional communities of practice and educational series. These bring together health care professionals with shared interests to foster continued knowledge exchange and interactive, case-based learning.

The recordings of all Pallium run communities of practice and series are available for viewing at [echopalliative.com](http://echopalliative.com).

Below are highlights from the past six months:

#### Pallium Canada

- [Lung Health Community of Practice](#) – In collaboration with the [Lung Health Foundation](#), Pallium launched a new accredited community of practice for those interested in integrating a palliative care approach for individuals with advanced lung disease. Over the course of five sessions, participants explore topics including symptom management and models of care, including home care, hospice, and palliative care units.
- [Community Based Primary Palliative Care Community of Practice](#) – This is the third accredited community of practice geared toward interprofessional primary care clinicians across Canada who are looking to augment their primary-level palliative care skills and connect with and learn from colleagues providing a palliative care approach.
- [Paramedic Community of Practice](#) – This community of practice was brought back by popular demand for a second series. The series connects community and ambulatory paramedics from across Canada who have a shared interest in integrating a palliative care approach for patients and their families.



- [Spiritual Care Community of Practice](#) – In partnership with the [Canadian Association for Spiritual Care](#), this community of practice welcomes health care professionals, system leaders, spiritual care practitioners, and psychospiritual therapists to come together and deepen their understanding of spirituality in palliative and bereavement care.
- [Paediatric Palliative Care Community of Practice \(in French\)](#) – In collaboration with [Le Phare, Enfants et Familles](#), Pallium launched a brand-new accredited French-language Community of Practice for paediatric palliative care professionals. Over six webinars, participants connect with French-speaking experts across Canada, engaging in case discussions and exploring essential topics like symptom management, pain approaches, and psychosocial support.
- **Unity Health Toronto Palliative Care Community of Practice** – This invitation-only series is an exciting initiative that brings together local Unity Health Toronto health care providers in small groups to collaborate, participate in expert-led discussions, and review community-based cases. It reflects the evolving vision of the Palliative Care ECHO Project — to foster sustainable, community-centered learning networks.

### **BC Centre for Palliative Care**

- **Grief and Bereavement Literacy Series** – This series explores unique experiences of grief, including loss after substance use, children’s grief, pregnancy and infant loss, and finding support during the holidays. It is designed for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of grief and bereavement, personally or professionally.
- **All Together ECHO Series** – As part of a compassionate communities initiative, this series is ideal for health care providers, volunteers, and community groups exploring Advance Care Planning, serious illness conversations, and fostering support through session topics like compassionate communities, social prescribing, and creating dementia-inclusive spaces.

- **Palliative Nurse Coordinators Series** – Recognizing the importance of supporting nurses' specialized consultant roles as Palliative Coordinators, this invitation-only series builds competency in their roles and increases connectedness between nurse clinicians to network, support and share resources.
- **Essential Conversations for the Healthcare Team** – This invitation-only series enhances communication skills within health care teams, fostering collaboration and connection. Sessions in this series provide valuable insights and strategies, helping professionals network and share best practices to improve patient care.

### **Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association**

- **CGNA Community of Practice** – This was the first series offered by the CGNA, and covered topics such as altered physiological and psychological responses in serious illness, integrating family caregivers into health care teams, and the role of extracellular vesicles in longevity research. These discussions were ideal for those looking to improve care for patients with complex needs and explore innovative approaches in aging and disease management.

### **Canadian Home Care Association**

- **Unpacking the Principles of a Palliative Approach to Care** – This series dives into how a holistic model can transform care by addressing patients' needs throughout their illness journey—not just at end-of-life. Guided by the Canadian Interdisciplinary Palliative Care Competency Framework, sessions explore the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to deliver effective, compassionate palliative care.

## **Covenant Health Palliative Institute**

- **Psychosocial-Spiritual Series** – This series was developed with Alberta-specific content and is ideal for social workers, spiritual care providers, creative arts therapists, occupational therapists, counsellors, psychologists, and other clinicians providing direct emotional and spiritual support. The topics are relevant to emotional, spiritual, and grief support in palliative care and bereavement as well as self-care for clinicians.
- **PalliLearn ECHO Series** – Back by popular demand, this series returned for a third time. Developed in Australia, this series was adapted for Alberta in partnership with Palliative Care South Australia and an Alberta working group. PalliLearn is a train-the-trainer program that helps people to develop the knowledge and skills to be a supportive friend and neighbour in times of sickness and loss, incorporating key research findings and practical ways to put them into action.

## **L'Institut de soins palliatifs et de fin de vie Michel-Sarrazin - Université Laval**

- **Croquettes scientifiques | Institut de soins palliatifs et de fin de vie MS-UL (in French)** – This webinar brought together experts in palliative and end-of-life care. Each expert summarized a recently published scientific article, sparking discussions on new scientific findings and innovative practices in the field of palliative and end-of-life care.
- **Conférence de l'Institut de soins palliatifs et de fin de vie MS-UL (in French)** – The goal of this conference was to present the key changes to the law regarding end-of-life care, including the introduction of the requirement for palliative care homes to include Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in their care offerings, as well as the provision allowing individuals with severe physical disabilities leading to significant and persistent impairments to request MAiD.

## **Médecins francophones du Canada**

- **Fin de vie Webinaire en soins palliatifs (in French)** – This French accredited series, co-hosted with [Palli-Science](#), covered topics including lung cancer, delayed lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, delayed pancreatic cancer, and hematological diseases. It continues to be highly attended by health care professionals in Quebec.

## **Montreal Institute for Palliative Care**

- **Family Caregiver Series** – This series, currently being held for a fourth time, is intended for family caregivers to have a space to learn, exchange ideas, and connect with others who may have caregiving stories that resonate with one another. Topics covered include advance care planning, family support in palliative care, self-care for family caregivers, and more.
- **Community of Practice Series for Home Healthcare Professionals** – Developed in partnership with the [Palliative Home-Care Society of Greater Montreal](#), this bilingual community of practice returned for its second series focusing on providing relevant palliative care knowledge to home health care professionals in Quebec.

## **North West Regional Palliative Care Program**

- **Palliative Care ECHO Lunch & Learn Series** – These sessions are designed for participants to learn about palliative care, with special guest speakers covering various topics such as symptom management, communication skills, ethical considerations, and holistic care approaches.
- **Evidence-Based Palliative Symptom Assessment and Management** – This series covers evidence-based approaches to managing palliative symptoms, including nausea, constipation, diarrhea, and dyspnea, with a focus on Advance Care Planning. It uses standardized tools to promote excellence in practice, equipping participants with the skills and knowledge to deliver compassionate, effective care.

## Standalone sessions

Pallium Canada and its Hub Partners have hosted several standalone ECHO sessions, inviting subject matter experts to present on topics relevant to Palliative Care. These sessions include:

### **Pallium Canada**

- [Navigating Psychedelic Journeys: A Comprehensive Webinar on Psilocybin Therapy and the End-of-Life Experience](#)
- [Symptômes gastro-intestinaux en soins palliatifs](#) (in French)

### **Canadian Society of Palliative Medicine**

- An Approach to Assessing Existential Distress for Physicians

### **Covenant Health Palliative Institute**

- Palliative Care Can Happen Anywhere: Education and Tools for Rehab Staff

## Palliative Care Journal Watch

The [Palliative Care Journal Watch](#) is a regular series of webinars that keeps audiences up to date on the latest peer-reviewed palliative care literature.

Led by subject matter experts from McMaster University, Queen's University and Pallium Canada, the program features contributions from institutions such as McGill University, the University of Toronto, the University of Manitoba, the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, and Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Israel. These contributors monitor over 30 journals to highlight key papers that challenge conventional thinking or validate current practices, offering valuable insights to advance palliative care.

The Palliative Care Journal Watch program is accessible in multiple formats, including as a live ECHO webinar, video recordings, slides, and the Palliative Care Journal Watch Podcast. The podcast has published 15 episodes to date, with over 7,000 downloads, reaching listeners from across the world (see map below).



## Evaluation and research

### Evaluation results to date

Research and evaluation are integral to the Palliative Care ECHO Project and all that we do. It's critical to ensure that we have the intended reach and impact and are delivering high-quality programs that meet the needs of our target audiences.

Two research activities are assessing the impact of the ECHO project:

- **Activity 1 (complete):** Analyzed the impact and value add that this project has had for Pallium and its Hub Partners, including an initial assessment of the quality and impact of programming. An embargoed copy of this research report was shared with Health Canada in May 2024.
- **Activity 2 (in progress):** A more in-depth evaluation of the evolution, reach, and impact of Communities of Practice (CoP). The project is underway, and interviews are being scheduled with CoP leads and members. A total of up to 40 interviews are planned.

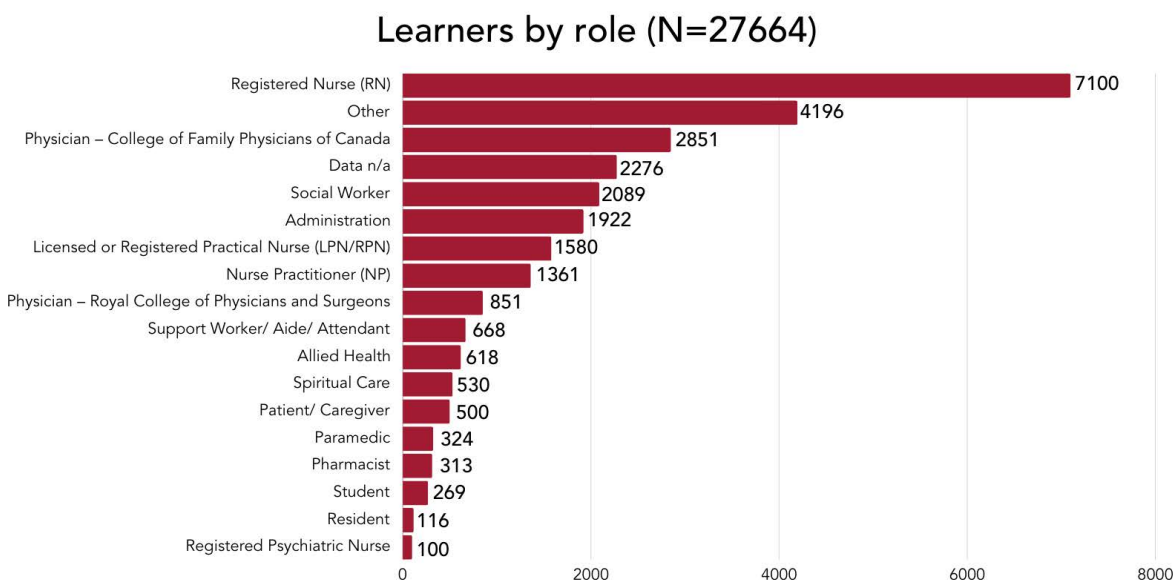
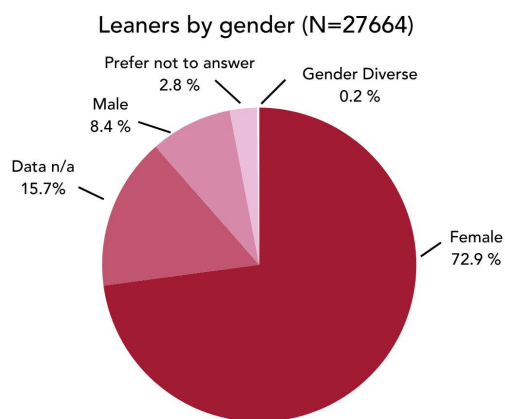
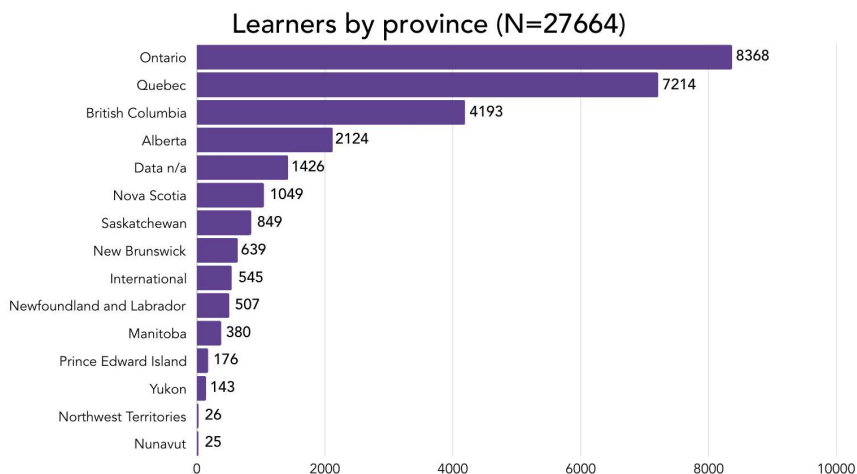
The full results of these evaluations will be shared in the coming year.



# Results and impact

## Palliative Care ECHO Project reach

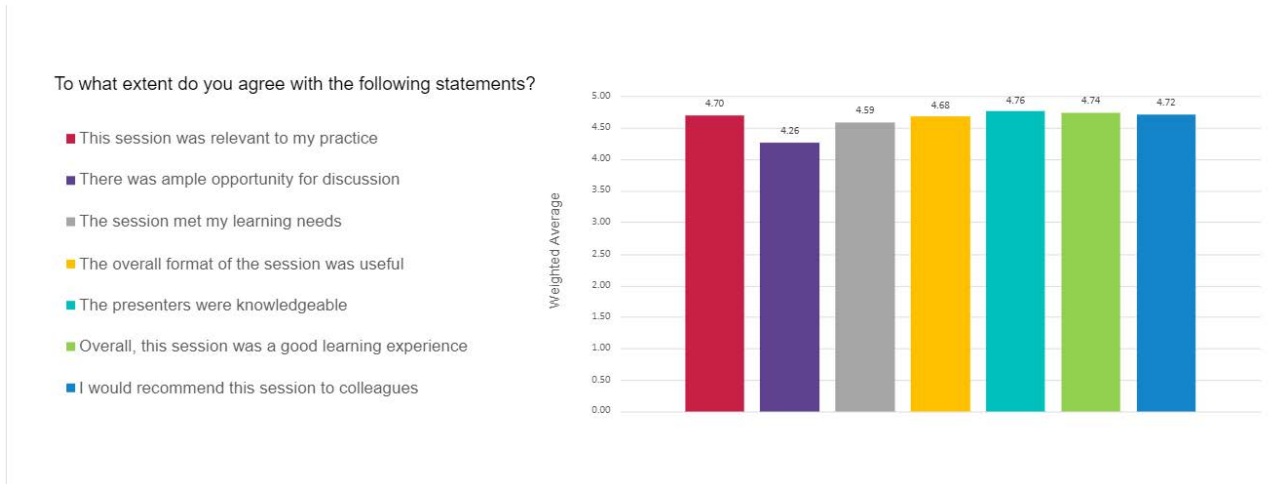
The Palliative Care ECHO Project has continued to reach health care providers from almost every province and territory across Canada and providers from many different professions and settings of care.



\*As of December 1, 2024.

## Learner experience

The ECHO programs continue to be well received by learners. Below are results from the initial post-session feedback surveys:



Here's what some of our learners had to say about our ECHO programs over the past year:



## Our supporters

Partnerships are at the heart of the Palliative Care ECHO Project and are critical to adapting the Project programming to meet their stakeholders' needs. Through the leadership of these amazing organizations, existing programs and resources can reach more health care providers and learners and new content and programming can be rapidly shared, developed, and deployed to fill gaps and enhance learning opportunities.

Thank you to the following supporters, whose contributions have helped the Palliative Care ECHO Project advance palliative care in Canada in the first few months of 2024-25.

- Boehringer Ingelheim LTD

## Funding

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**Want to learn more?** Stay connected at [echopalliative.com](https://echopalliative.com) or contact us at [echo@pallium.ca](mailto:echo@pallium.ca)

