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Brown Bag Series

Back Roads and Crossroads: The Challenges of Rural Palliative Medicine

Palliative Medicine (PM) is a nationally recognized medical specialty that is increasingly available in urban areas but is rare in rural areas. PM maximizes symptom management for chronic or serious illness and values patient-focused communication to help individuals, families, and care providers work together to better coordinate goals. Interdisciplinary PM teams help ease some of the stress of a serious illness and maximize quality of life for the patient. Are there valid reasons for not providing palliative care in hospitals, nursing homes, or other institutions? Unlike many specialists, PM physicians do not require expensive equipment or start-up costs. Why then is this specialty not available in most rural areas? Why aren't hospitals marketing palliative care services? Join us as we discuss some of the demographic, geographic, and socio-economic obstacles to bringing palliative care to Michigan's rural patients.

Malinda Bell, M.D., F.A.C.E.P. is Associate Medical Director of Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan and an Associate Professor with MSU-CHM. She is also a free-lance writer and peer-review editor with publications in JAMA, AFP, and Annals of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Bell is a 1985 graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine and a Clinical Skills Instructor for MSU-CHM.

Wednesday, February 15 • 12:00 - 1:00 pm