



Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine

Terms of Reference – 05.06.2025

Background:

The Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine builds on the legacy of the Nordic Specialist Course in Palliative Medicine (NSCPM), initiated in 2003. For over two decades, the NSCPM has played a vital role in advancing palliative medicine across the Nordic countries by providing structured education that has developed the expertise of physicians in the field. With the course concluding in 2025, the Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine has been established to continue and expand these collaborative efforts.

The network aims to strengthen cooperation among Nordic countries (Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden), creating a sustainable platform for education, research, and professional exchange to enhance the development of palliative medicine and ensure the highest standards of care for patients and their relatives.

Through this Terms of Reference, the Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine commits to fostering a strong, sustainable, and collaborative environment for the ongoing development of palliative medicine. Patients with palliative care needs in the Nordic countries, regardless of age or diagnosis, should be guaranteed the highest standard of compassionate care. Their relatives should be guaranteed sufficient support. The Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine will aim to ensure this by providing a platform for the field of palliative medicine that can make it thrive through research, education, and shared expertise.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine is to:

- Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among physicians across the Nordic countries who are involved or interested in palliative medicine.
- Enhance palliative medicine within the region by promoting best practices and the exchange of expertise.
- Promote the recognition of palliative medicine as a formal medical specialty in all Nordic countries and advocate for its further development.
- Collaborate on clinical research, educational programs, and the continuous advancement of specialist training in palliative care.

By doing so, the network aims to contribute to the advancement of palliative care across the Nordic countries, ensuring that patients and their relatives receive compassionate, high-quality care during life-threatening illness.

Core Values:

The Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine is guided by the following core values:

- **Integrity:** Ensuring that all network activities uphold the highest ethical standards and align with the core principles of palliative care.
- **Transparency:** Promoting open communication and accessibility of information to all network members and stakeholders, fostering trust and collaboration.
- **Sustainability:** Focusing on long-term strategies that support the continuous improvement and development of palliative care across the region.
- **Equity:** Advocating for fair access to palliative care resources and services for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- **Excellence:** Committing to high standards in clinical practice, research, and education, aiming for continuous improvement in the quality of palliative care, supported by collaboration with international organisations in palliative care with the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) as a key international collaboration partner.
- **Respect for the WHO Definition of Palliative Care:** Upholding care practices that enhance the quality of life for patients facing serious illness, aligning with the World Health Organization's definition of palliative care, which emphasizes the importance of comfort and support for patients and their relatives.
- **Promoting life-affirming care:** Affirming a strong commitment to palliative care as a means of providing comfort and dignity, promoting life-affirming care and the alleviation of suffering, aiming neither to hasten death nor prolonging life.

Network Structure:

The Nordic Network for Palliative Medicine will be governed by a steering committee, composed of 1-2 representatives appointed by each national association for palliative medicine in the Nordic countries. In cases where a country does not have a formal association for palliative medicine, local palliative care physicians will be responsible for appointing a representative to the committee.

The steering committee will have the following responsibilities:

- **Setting strategic goals** and establishing priorities that align with the network's purpose to enhance palliative medicine.
- **Overseeing the organization** of network events and activities that promote professional exchange and collaboration.
- **Facilitating joint educational and research initiatives**, ensuring the continued development of high-quality training programs and research in palliative care.
- **Coordinating** with national associations to ensure broad representation and participation from all Nordic countries.
- **Support** the creation of a digital platform to facilitate communication among members, enable resource-sharing, and disseminate information about network activities and achievements.
- **Organizing** regular meetings in the committee to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and promote developments in palliative care across the Nordic region, including documenting the minutes of the meetings.

Meetings: The steering committee will meet twice a year via online platforms. Additional virtual meetings will be organized as necessary to facilitate ongoing collaboration and the achievement of network goals set by the steering committee.

Revised and approved by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (15.01.2025).

Supported by physicians in charge of palliative medicine in: The Faroe Islands and Greenland.