



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR
HEALTHCARE AT HOMESM

2025
***Statewide Hospice &
Palliative Care Summit***

May 21, 2025 | Aqua Turf Club, Plantsville, CT

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

Continuing Education Units Pending

This continuing education activity is provided jointly by CT Association for Healthcare at Home and the Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing. Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing is approved as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by Connecticut Nurses' Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Provider Code P080.

2025 Statewide Hospice & Palliative Care Summit

May 21, 2025 | Aqua Turf Club, Plantsville, CT

Who Should Attend?

This program will benefit providers in all aspects of serious illness, especially home health, palliative and hospice care providers. We invite your entire Interdisciplinary Team: Physicians, Nurses, Therapists, Social Workers, Spiritual Counselors, Bereavement Coordinators, Home Health or Hospice Aides, Volunteers & Program Directors from across the provider continuum (hospitals, nursing homes, chronic illness providers, assisted living, home health and hospice).



Don't miss our Tea Cup Auction!

Our Tea Cup Auction supports the Association and the Connecticut hospice community. Full proceeds from both the conference and the auction go towards our mission, which includes providing advocacy and offering educational programs to improve access and quality of end-of-life care in Connecticut.



Program Agenda

8:00 AM

Registration, Exhibition & Breakfast

8:30 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Presented by Tracy Wodatch

8:45 AM

Why Happiness, Gratitude and the Better Moments Matter

Presented by Maria Sirois

9:45 AM

Hospice and Palliative Research in CT

Presented by Amisha Parekh de Campos (Middlesex) & Julie Robison/Ellis Dillon (UCONN)

10:45 AM

Tea Cup Auction & Exhibitor Visit

11:15 AM

Bereavement and Volunteer Support

Presented by Debbie Pausig (YNHH Hospice) & John Roush (VNHSC Hospice)

12:15 AM

Florence Wald Awards Presentation

12:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM

Words to Live By: The Unexpected Wisdom in Stories of the Dead

Presented by Mary McGreevy

2:30 PM

Afternoon Break

2:45 PM

Reimagining Views on Dying in Today's Culture

Presented by Hospice Nurse Penny

3:45 PM

Closing Remarks & Evaluations

Presented by Tracy Wodatch



A Tribute to Florence Wald

The Mother of End-of-Life Care in America

Florence Wald was an internationally recognized pioneer in improving the care of dying patients across the world. Her focus on an interdisciplinary approach to end-of-life care led her to open the first hospice in the United States (here in Connecticut) in 1973. As a visionary leader with an unwavering commitment to social justice and reverence for life, she invited patient, family, and team participation and truly listened to their input which ultimately started the hospice reform movement in this country.

Thirty-seven years later at the time of her death in 2008, there were over 4,700 hospices in the country.

The Florence Wald Award for Excellence in End-of-Life-Care

Eligibility Criteria

Since end-of-life care through hospice is a team approach to care, any individual team member or an entire team may be nominated for this award. Please consider all disciplines (medical director, nurses, social workers, chaplains, bereavement & volunteer coordinators, volunteers, hospice aides, or complementary therapy staff).

Nomination Deadline Friday, April 4, 2025

Access the nomination form by scanning the QR code.

Email nomination forms to:
verissimo@cthealthcareathome.org



Program Information

Why Happiness, Gratitude and the Better Moments Matter

Presented by Maria Sirois

The work of hospice is a work rampant with meaning, with depth and intensity, and often with a constant sense of pressure to do it all and do it all well. Layered into this work is a necessary attention to grief, the consequences of loss, and to the reality of our vulnerable humanity. Why then pay attention to moments that enable our laughter, our ease, a sense of delight? Why bother attending to what makes us happy...isn't happiness temporary after all? Dr. Maria Sirois, positive psychologist, resilience expert and long-standing advocate of hospice, offers both data and story to remind us of the potency of positive moments. She describes how and why they sustain us, lift us, and reduce our likelihood of burnout and/or chronic anxiety. Her keynote brings innovative skills that can be applied at work or at home, as well as gentle reminders of our own capacity for wellbeing and joy.

Words to Live By: The Unexpected Wisdom in Stories of the Dead

Presented by Mary McGreevy

Mary McGreevy shares her improbable journey from obituary reader to social media influencer. From a simple beginning (sharing fascinating obituaries on TikTok) to hundreds of thousands of followers, Mary has learned a thing or two about life from obituaries and she invites you to meet your new best life coaches: dead people. It's an entertaining and heartfelt ride into the heart of what matters in life.

Reimagining Views on Dying in Today's Culture

Presented by Penny Smith, BSN, RN

Death is a natural part of life that has been accepted throughout human history. In the past, people spent their final days at home, cared for by family. However, with advancements in medical technology and the ability to keep people alive longer, we tucked death away in hospitals. The establishment of hospice as a Medicare benefit began to reintroduce death in the home. Despite this, many people still find it difficult to accept mortality, and the topic of dying has become taboo. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 brought death to the forefront, prompting more public discussion and questions. Through social media, people sought information and guidance on these sensitive topics. This presentation aims to address the misunderstandings and misconceptions about hospice, death, and the dying process. It also focuses on leveraging social media to provide education and information at a grassroots level to the public.



Program Information

Hospice and Palliative Research in CT

SPEAKERS:

Amisha Parekh de Campos (Middlesex Care at Home) & Julie Robison/Ellis Dillon (UCONN)

Palliative and End-of-Life Access among Blacks in an Urban Setting: A Community-Based Panel Discussion

Amisha Parekh de Campos (Middlesex Care at Home)

This study identifies barriers and facilitators in EOL service utilization among Black Americans in a community setting. To address this, a group of community members, comprising a community advisory board (CAB) and a researcher, collaboratively developed a study to identify access to care. The panel of community members from the CAB will discuss their experience with the study and their findings based on the interview results.

A Study to Improve Hospice Care of the Connecticut Medicaid Population with Nursing Home Stays

Julie Robison & Ellis Dillon (UCONN)

The UCONN Center on Aging will share updates on research, in process, which is looking at the barriers to and facilitators of hospice use for dually eligible and Medicaid-only individuals with serious illness and a nursing home stay in the last year of life. The study includes interviews with Association hospice providers as well as several nursing homes throughout Connecticut.

Bereavement and Volunteer Support

SPEAKERS:

Debbie Pausig, LMFT (YNHH Hospice) & John Roush (VNHSC Hospice)

The Freshman 15 16 of Grief

Debbie Pausig, LMFT, CT, FT (YNHH Hospice)

My middle-aged loss and growth. The death of my husband 17 years ago catapulted me into who I am today and where I am now. Navigating constant changes along the way, I have found my human spirit to be powerful and resilient. We have the ability to adapt, adjust, accept, evolve, find meaning once again and thrive. It is a process and IT IS DOABLE!

Volunteering... the possibilities are endless

John Roush (VNHSC Hospice)

The presentation will start with John talking about how he got into the hospice field. John will then talk about the importance of volunteers as well as volunteer recruitment and retention and how he goes outside of the box with training and finding volunteers. He will then open it up to questions.



Maria Sirois, Psy.D.

Maria Sirois, Psy.D. has spent more than three decades in the board rooms of business, bedsides of the dying and everywhere in between to do one thing: offer the data, stories, tools and perspectives that enable us to cultivate resilience, health, wisdom and a greater capacity to lead ourselves and others well, no matter the strain or suffering of the moment. As a resilience expert, positive psychologist and international consultant, she is known for her authenticity, wisdom and compassion. She is the author of two books: *A Short Course in Happiness After Loss (And Other Dark, Difficult Times)* and *Every Day Counts*.



Amisha Parekh de Campos, PhD, MPH, RN, CHPN

Amisha has a joint appointment as an Assistant Clinical Professor, University of Connecticut School of Nursing, and Quality and Education Coordinator of the Middlesex Health Hospice Program, Middletown, CT. Amisha received her PhD in Nursing from the University of Connecticut (2020), BS and MPH in Global Health from the George Washington University (2001 & 2005). She received her BSN from the University of St. Joseph in 2009; additional certifications include hospice and palliative care (CHPN). Amisha started her career in public health establishing public health clinics and training community health workers in rural areas of south India and the Dominican Republic. She led initiatives on the prevention of HIV, tuberculosis, and mosquito-borne illnesses with community, government, and private organizations.



Julie Robison, PhD

Dr. Julie Robison, a gerontologist and health services researcher, is a Professor of Medicine and Public Health Science in the Center on Aging at the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Medicine. She conducts evidence-based health services research and intervention studies focused on aging families and long-term services, supports and policy, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. Her research aims to improve quality of life and quality of care for people who need long-term services and supports (LTSS), and their families. Dr. Robison is the director of the UConn Center on Aging's Evaluation and Population Assessment Core and Recruitment and Community Engagement Core. She is the past Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, an international forum for research with clear and immediate applicability to the health, care, and quality of life of older adults.



Ellis Dillon, PhD

Dr. Dillon is an Assistant Professor in the Center on Aging with a faculty appointment in the Department of Public Health Services. Dr. Dillon received her PhD in sociology from the University of California, San Diego, and was trained in health services research as a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford University's Clinical Excellence Research Center and Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute. Many of her studies use mixed-methods and qualitative research to understand quality of care and quality of life for individuals with needs for long-term services and supports both in the community and residing in nursing homes, as well as serious illness, and hospice and palliative care. She works closely with the Center on Aging team focused on evaluation of innovations in Connecticut Department of Social Services programs for older adults and people with disabilities.



Debbie Pausig, LMFT, CT, FT

Debbie Pausig, LMFT, CT, FT, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Fellow in Thanatology, Hospice Bereavement Coordinator for Health at Home-Hospice-Yale New Haven Health, and NHPCO-The Alliance Bereavement Professional Steering Committee Member. She also trains police and public safety officers in the State of CT on Death Notifications and Grief, Mourning & Bereavement through CABLECT's (Connecticut Alliance To Benefit Law Enforcement) Crisis Intervention Training.

She has been a keynote speaker and presenter for numerous organizations including CT Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Southern CT State University MFT Program, Albertus Magnus College Alumni, Agency on Aging of South-Central CT, New England Home care & Hospice, CT Association for Healthcare at Home and CT Women's Consortium. She has been a national speaker, professional support group leader and chapter trainer for Huntington's Disease Society of America.



John Roush, LMT

John Roush has been a Volunteer Coordinator for over 16 years, working in other agencies before coming to the VNHSC 5 years ago. He is a current mentor for the We Honor Veteran Program where he accomplished getting the 3 Hospices he's worked for to Level 4 and was a past co-chair for the WHV program. He has been on ECHN's Diversity Committee for 3 years and was awarded the People of Purpose award from ECHN which recognizes his commitment to improving the quality of health in our communities and to undertake his duties with professionalism and compassion, moving ECHN forward by living ECHN's purpose with his significant contributions



Mary McGreevy

Mary McGreevy is the creator and host of the popular social media channel Tips From Dead People, with more than 176,000 followers on TikTok, where she shares obituaries and the life lessons we can all learn from them. From the hilarious to the bittersweet and everything in between, Mary mines fascinating life stories for advice that we can all use today. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Masters of Public Affairs and Public Policy from La Follette School of Public Affairs at UW-Madison. However, as Tips from Dead People has taught her, it's the little things that are the big things. So, Mary would prefer you know that she is punctual to a fault, obsessed with tap dancing, and has never had a cup of coffee in her life. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with her husband Ernest and their dog, Mr. Bean.



Penny Smith, BSN, RN

Penny Smith, BSN, RN is a (US) nationally certified hospice and palliative care nurse, social media influencer and author of Influencing Death, Reframing Dying for Better Living. For 20 years, Penny has worked in a variety of care settings and roles within hospice including inpatient, home hospice case management, education, quality and regulatory. She currently works as a hospice quality assurance nurse for an organization in Washington state.

Registration Form

May 21, 2025 | Aqua Turf Club, Plantsville, CT

Registration Fees

\$175 Members \$275 Non-members \$135 Full-time Students, Volunteers, and Hospice Aides

Discount opportunity! Send more and save! 5% off when you register 3 or more.

Please register by May 7, 2025 and return completed form to:

110 Barnes Rd, PO Box 90,
Wallingford, CT 06492-0090

T 203.265.9931 F 203.949.0031
E verissimo@cthealthcareathome.org
(Fed Tax ID) 06-0867238

Registration Deadline

May 7, 2025: A \$30 late fee will be charged per person for each registration received after the deadline.

Contact Information

Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Attendees

Name: _____ Title: _____ Email: _____

Meal Choice: Chicken Fish Beef Vegetarian

Name: _____ Title: _____ Email: _____

Meal Choice: Chicken Fish Beef Vegetarian

Name: _____ Title: _____ Email: _____

Meal Choice: Chicken Fish Beef Vegetarian

*Please advise if you have a dietary restriction.

Payment Method

Credit Card: Visa Master Card American Express Discover

Cardholder's Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

CVV/Security Code: _____ Telephone: _____

Check:

Included OR

Will be sent separately

TOTAL DUE:

Payment/Cancellation Policy

Payment must be made in advance of this program. Payment can be made by cash, check, or credit card. Cancellations made on or after May 7, or 'no shows' will forfeit the registration fee. Cancellations must be received in writing via e-mail.