

### Background and Purpose

PAs are fundamentally trained as team-based providers, compassionate listeners, and capable of patient management in all specialties and settings.

Exponential increases in the population of serious illness patients (SIP), including the post-COVID cohort, has drastically increased the need for the existing healthcare workforce to acquire specialized palliative skillsets.

PAs are well-suited for integrating palliative care into general practice or as specialty providers. This program was created to:

- Enhance PA training as palliative specialists
- Position PAs for leadership roles on inter-professional teams
- Address critical workforce needs with advanced skills and knowledge

### Objectives

Discuss the advantages of closing the gap in Advanced Practice Provider (APP) education, competencies and employability in palliative medicine and hospice care.

Design and implement an innovative online training program for APPs by PAs in palliative and serious illness care.

### Course Design

In collaboration with the Haynes Shiley CSU Institute for Palliative Care three phases were developed:

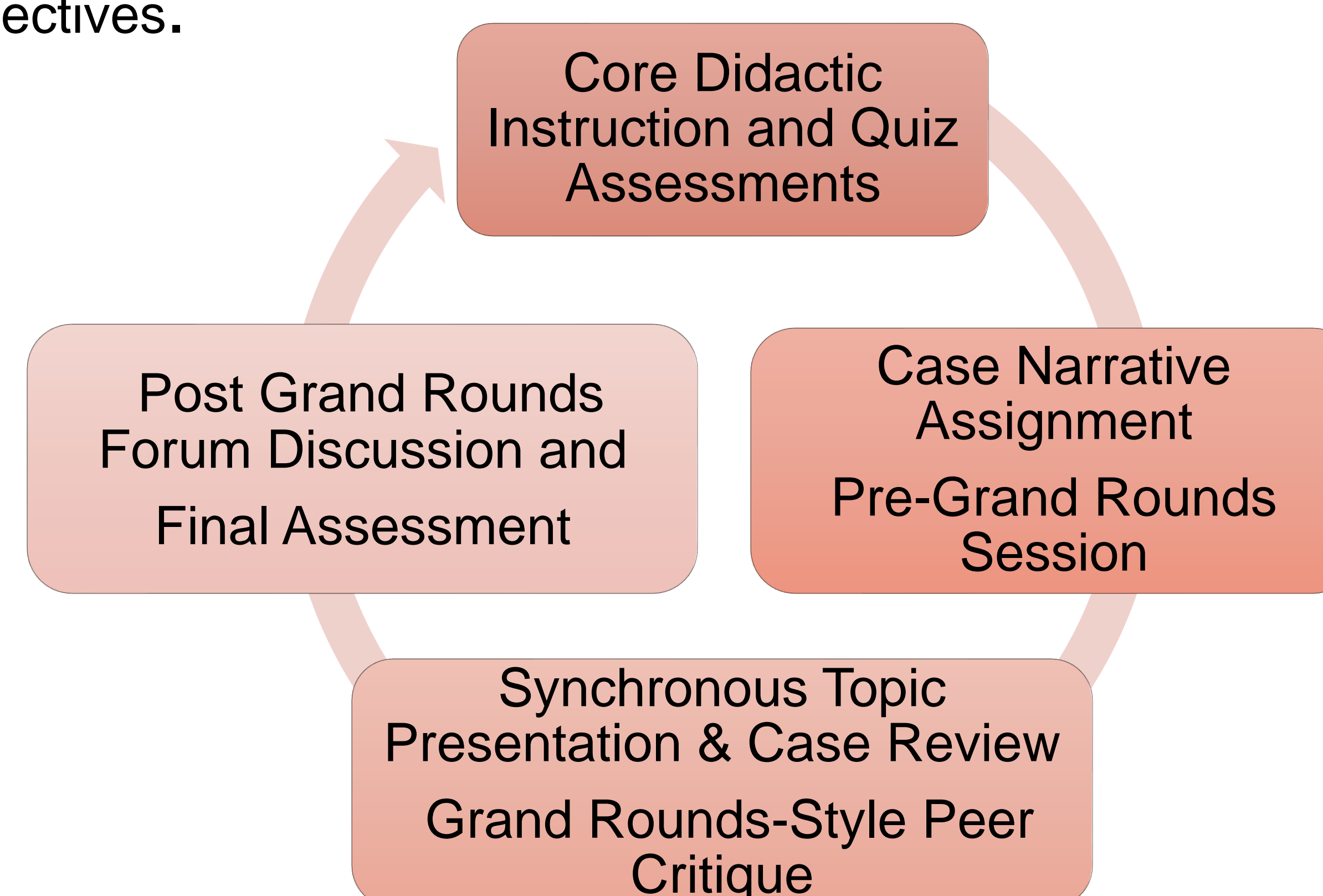
- Up-to-date core online didactic course
- 12 weekly synchronous, recorded 90-minute Grand Round style sessions with pre-and-post assessments
- Post-course debriefing and evaluation of course and instructors

### Course Description and Method

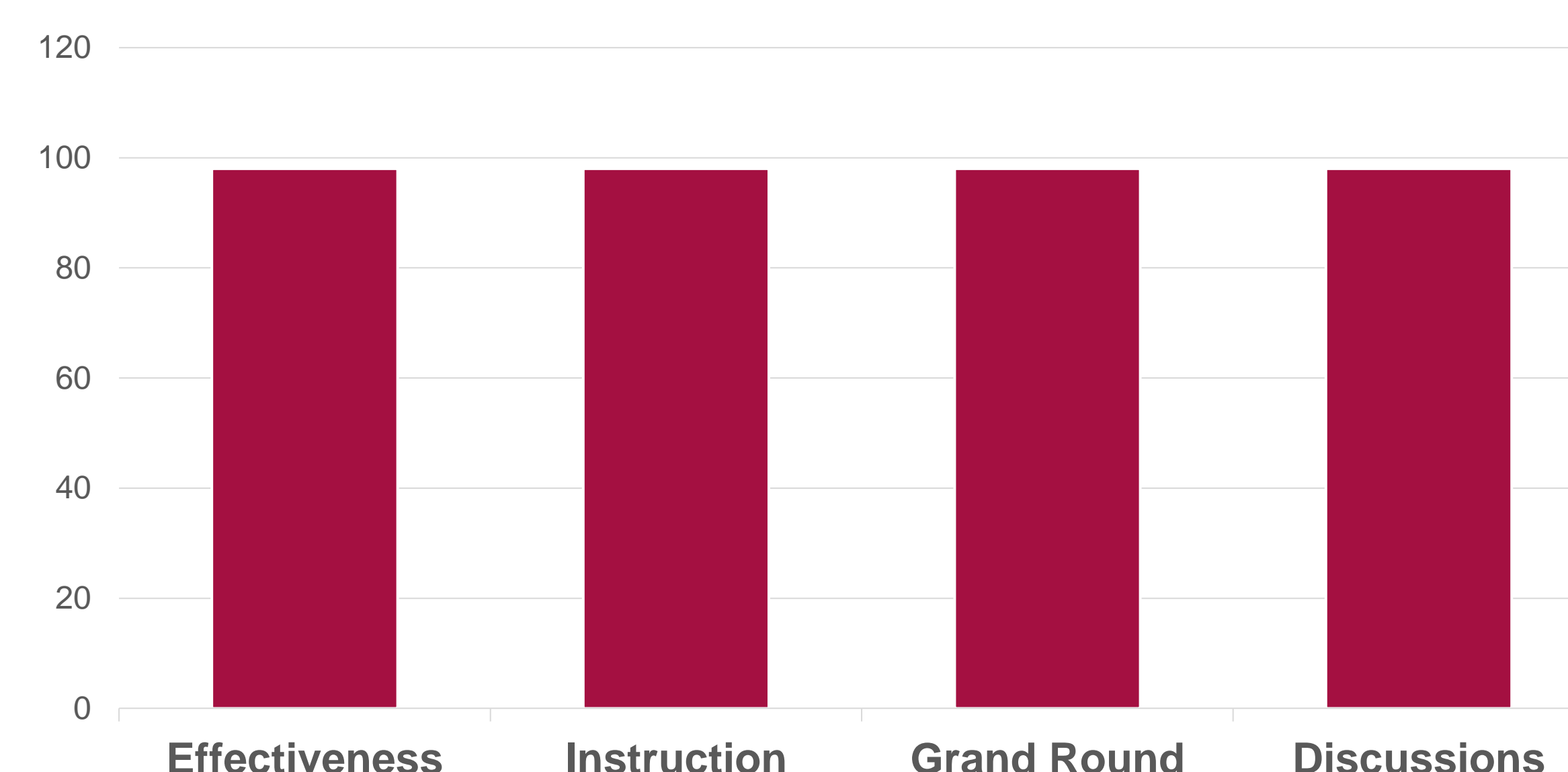
This 12-week, \*HyFlex online course combines synchronous interactive and asynchronous didactic elements with assessments and discussion forums among all participants including instructor/facilitators.

- Review core didactic material with downloadable resources
- Participate in weekly synchronous group sessions aligned with core didactic material and a case assignment
- Present and analyze the case in a synchronous (live) Grand Rounds session with a PA content expert
- Continue group discussion in interactive asynchronous Post-Grand Round assignments

\*HyFlex means “hybrid” and “flexible”. Hybrid learning integrates complementary face-to-face (synchronous) and online learning (asynchronous) experiences in service of intended learning objectives.



98% strongly agree/agree with overall effectiveness of program;  
Data from 2 cohorts



### Participant Survey Comments

**This must be the best course I have taken in a long time.**

**The Live Grand Round sessions are very well run. The cases are challenging and instructive.**

**I really like the discussion forums and hearing about other participant patient experiences.**

**Would be helpful to have small group break outs to debrief and discuss with each other...**

**The number of didactic links and articles were phenomenal.**

**Would like more references and articles for topics such as pediatric palliative care.**

### Discussion and Conclusions

This program offers training in skills and competencies that align with hospital systems, accreditation agencies and PA training standards. It is a ‘training in place’ experience in an accredited, certificate bearing course for PAs and other APPs. It recreates the ‘Grand Rounds’ as a \*HyFlex experience for modern healthcare education.

This program will be of interest to clinicians, administrators and employers in palliative and end-of-life care, in-and-outpatient facilities and community based and/or home care agencies looking to optimize team performance and improve patient care.

As a foremost promoter of PA education and lifelong learning, the collaborative team has produced a course that provides most of the didactic elements in the blueprint for the new Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) in Palliative Medicine and Hospice Care.

#### Resources:

Beatty, B.J. (2019). Hybrid-Flexible course design (1st ed.). EdTech Books. <https://edtechbooks.org/hyflex>

Columbia University in New York City (2022). HyFlex teaching: one class, three modalities. <https://academifairs.sps.columbia.edu/hyflex>

LaDelfa IHP. Evaluating medical grand rounds: results of the application of a method of evaluation in a university teaching hospital. *Ann R Coll Physicians Surg Can.* 1988; 21:25–28.

Sandal S, Iannuzzi MC, Knohl SJ. Can we make grand rounds “grand”? *J Grad Med Educ.* 2013;5(4):560-563. doi:10.4300/JGME-D-12-00355.1