



Physician to Physician: Meet Our Hospice National Medical Directors

By Ronald J. Crossno, MD, FAAFP, FAAHPM, Chief Medical Officer and National Medicine Director, Kindred at Home-Hospice Division

Kindred at Home/CURO Health Services is a family of hospice care providers committed to clinical excellence with compassion and dignity. Our physician leadership guides our family of agencies and provides support for clinicians. Meet our National Medical Directors (NMDs) Mark Fox, MD HMDC FAAHPM, and Ronald Crossno, MD HMDC FAAHPM.

Both NMDs are board-certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine (HPM) and hold the additional credential of Hospice Medical Director, Certified (HMDC). Each has over thirty years of medical and HPM experience, and they have each been involved with state and national level HPM organizations. For example, Dr. Crossno is a past president of the Texas Academy of Palliative Medicine (TAPM) and the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM), and Dr. Fox serves on the board of the Carolina Center for Hospice and End of Life Care. Both are active in AAHPM and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Our NMDs provide a physician voice to leadership and internal policy development, and they serve a principle role to support our medical directors and physicians in the field. While many of these physicians have completed training and certification in HPM, others work part-time for our hospice programs and may have need of expert HPM advice. Our NMDs provide one-to-one informal consultations when needed for difficult or challenging cases. With 400+ hospice programs across the country, the use of distance learning is increasingly necessary. Our NMDs design and create educational offerings as part of our Clinical Expert Series, two live webinars each month addressing pertinent topics. The webinars are recorded and are archived in our comprehensive online HPM library.

Educational topics with which our NMDs might assist include eligibility requirements based on the patient's underlying medical condition or conditions. These also might include best practices for pain and other symptom management for patients with serious illness or life-limiting diagnoses.



Dr. Mark Fox



Dr. Ronald J. Crossno

Other areas of expertise involve best communication practices regarding advance care planning or how to have conversations regarding prognosis and prognosis-appropriate goals of care. Such patients may benefit from home health, hospice, or perhaps palliative care. Our NMDs stay well-informed regarding the advancement of palliative care across our country and are involved with our internal work to develop palliative care offerings that support patients who may not be hospice appropriate or ready.

Dr. Fox and Dr. Crossno also serve externally with the organizations listed above, presenting at various HPM meetings, and attending functions to stay abreast of new developments within the field. Such external interactions also apply to the general medical community, interfacing with referral sources and potential partners for the provision of hospice for our mutual patients. This might include reviewing and eliminating potential educational deficits or system-level barriers so that care can be provided in the optimal setting for the patient, which may often be in the home.

If there are any questions or concerns that are not readily answered by our field-level physicians or staff, do not hesitate to reach out to one of our NMDs. Contact your local Kindred at Home/CURO Health Services hospice representative to start our conversation.