

## Grant Funds Research to Improve Palliative Care for COPD Patients

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DENVER — For patients with advanced [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#) (COPD), shortness of breath, depression and anxiety can be debilitating, sabotaging treatment and severely diminishing quality of life. Researchers at National Jewish Health have received a grant to study how palliative care may improve symptoms and quality of life for people living with COPD.

Palliative care optimizes quality of life for people living with serious illness and their families by addressing physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual needs. It can be offered at the same time as curative care, and has been shown to improve patient outcomes.

“Historically there has been little attention paid to palliative care for COPD patients,” said lead researcher Bronwyn Long, RN, DPN. “We believe there is a great opportunity here. Offering palliative care to COPD patients in a clinic setting could have a significant, positive impact on their lives for months or even years.”

COPD, a progressive lung disease, is the third leading cause of death in the United States, killing about 135,000 Americans each year. Currently there are no treatments that can cure the disease and limited methods for slowing its progress.

Shortness of breath is the most distressing symptom to COPD patients, and they report higher levels of depression and anxiety than people with lung cancer. While there have been efforts to address these issues individually, they have not been addressed in a coordinated manner all at the same time.

The grant, from the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association, via the American Nurses Foundation, funds a pilot program that relies on an advanced practice nurse to assess advanced COPD patients for all three issues and offer several pharmacological and non-pharmacological strategies to cope with them.

“Patients who suffer anxiety and depression are less likely to take their medications, participate in pulmonary rehabilitation, and are at higher risk for hospitalizations,” said Long. “If we can successfully address these problems in COPD patients, we believe they will realize benefits in both their physical and emotional health.”

**National Jewish Health** is known worldwide for treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders, and for groundbreaking medical research. Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to these disorders. *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked National Jewish Health the #1 respiratory hospital in the nation for 15 consecutive years.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

### Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

**Jessica Berry**

303.398.1082  
berryj@njhealth.org