

Meetings of Neuropalliative Care Minds: Reflections and Lessons from Conferences & Meetings

Dear INPCS Community,

The Strategic Communications Committee is delighted to start another new Blog series in addition to our monthly Blogs and the Featured Neuropalliative Care Champion Series.

*The INPCS **Meetings of Neuropalliative Care Minds: Reflections and Lessons from Conferences & Meetings** Blog series will include reflections from our neuropalliative care community on learnings and experiences at academic or professional meetings and conferences.*

Kicking off this series, Annie Weisner and Kara Bischoff share their thoughts on the American Association of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) conference that took place in San Diego, CA between March 4th-7th, 2026.

We invite you to read and be inspired by what our community is learning and doing!

Kind Regards

*Sandhya Seshadri
Chair, SCC, INPCS*

Meeting of Neuropalliative Care Minds: Reflections from Conferences & Meetings Blog Series 1: Reflections on the AAHPM Meeting



By **Annie Weisner**, MD PhD, Pediatric neurologist and Neuropalliative care physician, Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, & **Kara Bischoff**, MD, Palliative care physician, University of California, San Francisco

This year's AAHPM Annual Assembly gave the community a chance to connect, share expertise, and brainstorm plans for the year ahead. Throughout the conference, *neuropalliative care was at the forefront – with topics spanning the lifespan, covering patient and caregiver perspectives, and tackling both common and complex neurological symptoms for the broader hospice and palliative care audience.*

On the first day, over a dozen members from around the country gathered to kick off the Assembly and connect at a local restaurant and brewery. The group included trainees, early and mid-career faculty, as well as five current and former leaders of the Neuropalliative Special Interest Group (SIG). We discussed navigating career changes, structuring clinical roles, being a parent in medicine, and much more.

The next day, the conference kicked off with two-and-a-half days of packed content, with neuro- and neuro-adjacent topics in every room. Talks and posters focused on symptom management, offering opportunities to brush up on neuropalliative fundamentals such as “*Calm Your Nerves*” (Kara Bischoff, Jessica Besbris, Greg Merrill, Kasey Malotte, Neha Kramer), where speakers spoke with a packed audience about managing ALS, Parkinson’s disease, and epilepsy. Others introduced novel solutions to complex neurological symptoms, such as *refractory agitation in advanced Huntington’s* (Nieves Sanchez and Orly Hadar), *jaw clonus in ALS* (Santosh Yatam Ganesh), and *severe apathy in advanced dementia* (Joshua Borris and Nicole Bou Rjeily). “*Sleep No More*” (Tyler Luonuansuu, Claudia Chou, Erin Taylor) offered a film noir style journey through management of severe insomnia which left me asking, “where do I subscribe to this podcast?”

Other notable talks bridged subspecialties to build a shared model for neuropalliative patient care, such as high-yield rehabilitation interventions and use of durable medical equipment in neuropalliative care (Rita Crooms, Grace Suttle, Gioia Ciani, Andrea Lendaris, Leah Walsh), and emergency care plans for medically complex pediatric patients (Helen Queenan, Uma Subrayan, Sonia Malhotra, Hillary Lum).

Pediatric topics focused on ethical challenges within the field of neuropalliative care, including foregoing nutrition and hydration in severe neonatal encephalopathy (Mariana Passos, Christian Cintron, Ashley Lanzel, Nimisha Bajaj) and navigating treatment refusals (Phobe Win et al.), as well as highlighted innovations and opportunities in outpatient care such as standardizing palliative care in leukodystrophy clinic (Samira A. Vasquez et al.), interdisciplinary integration of palliative care in neuromuscular clinic (Angelli Aguilar et al.), and perceived benefits and impact of a novel neuropalliative medicine clinic (Grant Lin and Lauren Treat).

On day three, the Neuropalliative SIG hosted our annual meeting, and over 30 members with a broad range of career paths, personal experiences, and interests came together to summarize our work in the past year and discuss our hopes for the year ahead. We brainstormed topics for future virtual seminars such as high yield neurological examination findings, catatonia, disability equity, and psychosocial needs in neuropalliative care. This year, we kicked things off with a

panel about “Neuropalliative Perspectives on Neuropathic Pain” on May 5. In September, we will have a seminar focused on providing palliative care to individuals with communication impairment, including perspectives from a care partner, speech therapist, physician, and spiritual care provider.

We plan to host two additional virtual seminars throughout the year and are considering submitting a pre-conference workshop proposal for next year’s Assembly focused on neuropalliative care topics. All AAHPM members are welcome to join these events, and we encourage you to consider joining the Neuropalliative SIG and the 2027 Annual Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA.

