More than 7 million people die from cancer each year (World Health Organization, 2009). Many receive inadequate pain management or symptom control and little attention to psychological, social, and spiritual concerns. The inadequate care is caused, in part, by lack of education of healthcare professionals, limited availability of opioids and other medications, and insufficient resources (Ferrell, Virani, Grant, & Juarez, 2000; McMillan & Weitzen, 2000; Morrison, Wallenstein, Natale, Senzel, & Huang, 2000). The barriers persist to some degree in North America and the developed world, but they can be profound in the developing world (Brennan, Carr, & Cousins, 2007; Sepulveda et al., 2003; Taylor, Gostin, & Pagonis, 2008). The result is a global phenomenon of needless suffering for those with cancer.

Internationalizing End-of-Life Nursing Education

One strategy to address the urgent need is nursing education about palliative care. The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC), which began in February 2000, initially was funded by a major grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, with later funding from the National Cancer Institute, Aetna Foundation, Archstone Foundation, and California Healthcare Foundation. The ELNEC curriculum was developed by experts from the City of Hope in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. By early 2009, 58 ELNEC training programs had been held throughout the United States, with almost 6,000 nurses attending from a variety of

At a Glance

✦ Many of the more than 7 million people who die from cancer each year receive inadequate pain or symptom control and little attention to psychological, social, and spiritual concerns.

✦ The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium—International curriculum addresses the urgent need for nursing education regarding palliative care.

✦ International education regarding palliative care requires an understanding of different disease patterns and clinical practices, along with cultural humility and empathy.