



# the schwartz center

FOR COMPASSIONATE HEALTHCARE

## **Schwartz Center Awards \$110,000 in Grants to Improve End of Life Care** *Funded projects to spur family and caregiver conversations*

**Boston, MA (August 12, 2013)** - The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a Boston-based nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers, has announced the awarding of \$110,000 in grants to Atrius Health, Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, and The Conversation Project. The three organizations, all based in the Boston area, will use the grant funds to improve care at the end of life.

Atrius Health, which serves nearly one million patients in eastern and central Massachusetts, has been awarded \$100,000 over two years to support its Serious Illness Communication Project (SICP). SICP will help to start conversations between primary care clinicians and patients to ensure that patients receive the care they want and are at peace at the end of life. The project was initially developed to improve end of life care for cancer patients by Atul Gawande, MD, Susan Block, MD, and Rachelle Bernacki, MD, working with patients and families at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. This grant will expand that work to primary care for the first time, under the direction of Principal Investigator Eliza Shulman, MD, chief of geriatrics for Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, an Atrius Health affiliate.

SICP will include the creation and use of a conversation guide for clinicians to talk to patients about their preferences at the end of life, a training program for clinicians to learn how to use the guide, and an electronic medical record module to record these conversations in patients' electronic health records. As a Pioneer accountable care organization (ACO), Atrius Health will have access to data allowing its staff to evaluate the impact SICP has on patients, families, and the healthcare system. Atrius Health is a nonprofit alliance of six community-based medical groups, including Harvard Vanguard. Harvard Vanguard, a nonprofit, multi-specialty medical group practice, that provides care to thousands of patients throughout Massachusetts.

Additionally, a grant of \$10,000 has been awarded to The Conversation Project to continue the Schwartz Center's support of that organization's ongoing efforts to have every person's end-of-life wishes expressed and respected. The Conversation Project was co-founded in 2010 by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and columnist Ellen Goodman and is based at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in Cambridge, MA.

The Schwartz Center's initial grant helped The Conversation Project launch a website with resources and tools that families can use to have conversations about their end of life wishes and preferences. The 2013 grant will help The Conversation Project continue its work to ensure that all Americans are able to express their wishes for care at the end of life.

Schwartz Center grants are intended to improve communication skills, cultural competency, spirituality, and end of life care. In addition, for the past several years, the Center has supported programs that utilize patients and family members as educators of compassionate, patient- and

family-centered care. Since 1997, the Schwartz Center has awarded more than \$2 million in grants to healthcare organizations throughout the U.S.

The Atrius Health grant is made possible in part by gifts in memory of Christian Minard and Laurie Schwartz Naparstek.

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### **About the Schwartz Center**

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare ([www.theschwartzcenter.org](http://www.theschwartzcenter.org)) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers and preserving the human connection in healthcare. The Center reflects the vision of Ken Schwartz, a Boston healthcare attorney who died of lung cancer at age 40 and found that what mattered most to him as a patient was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers. He founded the Schwartz Center in 1995 to ensure that all patients receive compassionate care. The Center is housed at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, where Ken Schwartz received his care. Its signature program, Schwartz Center Rounds<sup>®</sup>, has been adopted by more than 300 hospitals and other healthcare organizations across the US and UK.

### **About Atrius Health**

Atrius Health ([www.atriushealth.org](http://www.atriushealth.org)) is a not-for-profit alliance of six community-based medical groups and a home health care and hospice agency. The Atrius Health groups include: Dedham Medical Associates, Granite Medical Group, Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, Reliant Medical Group, South Shore Medical Center, Southboro Medical Group, and VNA Care Network & Hospice. Its 8,200 employees, including more than 1,000 physicians and 2,100 other health professionals, serve nearly one million patients across eastern and central Massachusetts.

### **About the Conversation Project**

The Conversation Project ([www.theconversationproject.org](http://www.theconversationproject.org)), co-founded by Pulitzer Prize-winner Ellen Goodman and launched in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement ([www.ihl.org](http://www.ihl.org)), is a public engagement campaign with a goal that is both simple and transformative: *to have every person's end-of-life care expressed and respected*. The Conversation Project offers people the tools, guidance and resources they need to begin talking with their loved ones, around the kitchen table, about their wishes and preferences. Over the past year, over 50,000 copies of TCP's starter kit to help individuals begin to have the conversation with their loved ones and their clinicians have been downloaded. TCP is working with business, faith-based organizations and communities from coast to coast assisting them to become conversation ready. Have you had the conversation?