

Touchpoints

A newsletter of the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center

*Dedicated to
strengthening the
relationship between
patients and
caregivers*

Schwartz Center pivotal in advanced end-of-life training for social workers

SEVERAL YEARS before launching the Post Masters End-of-Life Certificate Program at Smith College School of Social Work, faculty member Dr. Joan Berzoff realized that despite regularly encountering death and dying in their work, social workers rarely receive any significant training in how to care for patients and their families during end of life. Dr. Berzoff learned this the hard way: While her sister, a vibrant mother of three, was dying of cancer, no social worker intervened to support her three children and husband, who were suffering intensely.

Berzoff believed that the intervention of a social worker would have helped her sister's family cope with its loss. She initiated a first-of-its-kind program at Smith College that would: provide practitioners with the knowledge, values, and clinical skills that encourage advanced practice in end-of-life care; promote interdisciplinary collaboration among providers serving patients and families; and foster leadership in the field of end-of-life care. The Schwartz Center provided funding for clinical supervision, a core component of the program in which participants communicate regularly with an experienced social worker.

Since its inception in 2000, the Smith certificate program has attracted professional social workers of the highest caliber, hailing from throughout North America, and from diverse work settings including hospital hospice and palliative care programs, nursing

homes, and many community-based organizations. Participants begin and end the program with a one-week summer session of theory and methodology classes. During the academic year, they return to their places of work and begin an eight-month clinical internship.

In 2001 and 2002, the Schwartz Center's support of clinical supervision made possible the use of mentors



The Schwartz Center funded supervision by social workers such as Moyra Rondon, MSW, pictured above, for Smith's End-Life-Certificate program. Students and supervisors talk twice a month to discuss the student's day-to-day work with patients and families.

from New York City-based Cancer Care, Inc., a nationally prominent social work organization with expertise in end-of-life care. Each student is assigned an advanced practitioner from Cancer Care who acts as clinical supervisor. Their interaction is designed to deepen insight and build a stronger understanding of complex emotional processes related to end-of-life care. Georgina Lucas, Director of the
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SAVE THE DATE

Invitations will be mailed soon for the eighth annual Schwartz Center dinner on October 23, 2003 at the Copley Westin Hotel. The evening will include an announcement of the recipient of the fifth annual Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award and a performance by multitalented Tony and Emmy Award winner Ben Vereen. Rich and Kris Doherty, Tom and Jackie O'Neill, and Steve and Peggy Tringale will chair the dinner.

— *Advanced end-of-life training for social workers*

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Center for Innovative Practice and Social Work Education at Smith College, says the clinical supervision component funded by the Schwartz Center is a unique and essential element of the program.

Both participants and educators agree that they can gain invaluable knowledge about end-of-life care through experience, but when time is limited, most social workers find it difficult to process emotions while assimilating essential clinical information. Moyra Rondon, a social worker and supervisor from Cancer Care, says the program “provides seasoned clinical social workers an opportunity to stop, learn and reflect on the meaning and depth of the work they are doing day in and day out.” Jeana Hayes-Carrier, MSW, PhD, a graduate of the program from Texas who is now a supervisor herself, says, “What I most appreciate about the program is that trained social workers are now placed in communities throughout the country, and are better prepared to meet the needs of individuals and families struggling with complicated end-of-life issues.”

Upon completion of the eight-month internship, participants write an extensive analysis that integrates their first summer’s coursework into their recent patient experiences. These papers are used as tools in the second summer’s coursework, which is designed to deepen participants’ clinical practice expertise and to teach them how to initiate system changes. Classes include focused subjects such as leadership, advanced spiritual practice, and multicultural and underserved populations. Through the unique combination of classroom learning, regular supervision, and day-to-day experiences with patients and families, participants become experts in end-of-life care.

To date, more than fifty social workers have completed the program and several graduates have become supervisors for incoming participants. Many others have independently

comprehensive textbook on end-of-life care, co-edited by Dr. Berzoff and a Smith faculty member and due to be released later this year. One graduate returned to Smith to teach the program.

“Working with individuals and families who are facing the end of their lives is both richly rewarding and profoundly challenging. The Smith program has been one of the most important educational experiences of my career.”

*– Bruce Thompson, MSW, PhD
Program graduate and supervisor*

developed interdisciplinary peer supervision models, spiritual assessment tools, and in-service training within their own organizations. Two graduates have developed full end-of-life curricula in schools of social work. Others have contributed chapters for the first

Through its support of the End-of-Life Care program, the Schwartz Center has helped create a pipeline of dedicated social workers who share their knowledge, set examples for their peers, and act as role models for future compassionate caregivers.

WASHINGTON, DC, EVENT ATTRACTS MAJOR PLAYERS IN HEALTH CARE

FOR A SECOND YEAR, the Schwartz Center held a reception in Washington, DC, bringing together representatives from key national health organizations, advocacy groups, and friends and supporters of the Schwartz Center. Sponsors included the American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, Association of American Medical Colleges, American Association of Health Plans, American Health Lawyers Association, the American Association of Retired Persons, and the National Association of Children’s Hospitals. Proceeds from the event exceeded \$20,000.

The law office of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo and ML Strategies were gracious hosts, once again demonstrating their longstanding and active commitment to the Schwartz Center mission. Hope Foster, co-manager of the law firm’s health care practice, underscored the importance of the Schwartz Center’s work in comments that brought the focus of those involved with the legislative and regulatory side of health care back to the patient: “Ultimately, the success of what we do in Washington, DC, will depend on whether the patient received the care that was needed and whether that care was provided with the type of compassion that we all deserve.”

Guests at the Washington, DC, fundraiser, listened to Hope Foster of Mintz Levin talk about the relevance of the Schwartz Center’s work to the regulatory and legislative side of health care.



OUR HEALTH CARE WORLD

IN JULY 1995 Ken Schwartz wrote, "The hospital was mobbed, and the nurses seemed harried. Eventually, a nurse who was to conduct a presurgical interview called my name. Already apprehensive, I was breathing hard. The nurse was cool and brusque, as if I were just another faceless patient. But once the interview began, and I told her that I had just learned that I probably had advanced lung cancer, she softened, took my hand and asked how I was doing. We talked ... and the following day ... she came by, held my hand, and with moist eyes, wished me luck. This small gesture was powerful; my apprehension gave way to a much-needed moment of calm."

Early this summer, the *Boston Globe* carried an op-ed piece titled "Cutbacks in nursing are harming patients." The June 2002 *American College of Surgeons Bulletin* dedicated an issue to "the health care worker shortage," and during the same month, reports were released by the American Hospital Association Commission on Workforce and the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation examining the reasons for and the impact of the nursing shortage. These and other important nursing shortage studies address in detail a range of critical issues including placing the patient at risk for increased illness, the possibility of higher

mortality rates, and nursing retention and recruitment.

Specifically, the RWJ study reported that nurses frequently were only able to provide for patients' most critical physical needs, such as giving medications and performing assessments. They also noted that nurses said the greatest rewards were: caring for patients and their families; providing physical care and psychosocial support; patient education; and serving as patient advocates. The RWJ report also dedicated considerable attention to:

- the needs of caring for the aging baby boom generation, factoring in longer life expectancy, demand for chronic care, and the expense and complexities associated with new technological developments;
- the challenges that the growing diversity of the U.S. population pose for the cultural competency of nurses and the lack of diversity within the profession; and
- the average age of 44 for U.S. nurses, which means that a large portion of the existing nursing workforce will retire over the next decade.

None of this bodes well for a profession often undervalued and overworked.

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CELEBRATING WOMEN IN HEALTH CARE

THE SCHWARTZ CENTER held a successful reception on May 29 in **Celebration of Women in Health Care**. More than 300 enthusiastic women (and a few men) gathered at the law offices of Goulston & Storrs, which graciously hosted the group and gave guests the chance to enjoy a rare sunny spring day on its waterfront deck. While providing a wonderful networking opportunity, the event raised \$40,000 for the Schwartz Center.

Attendees included both longtime supporters and newcomers to the organization as well as most of the key female health care leaders in Massachusetts. Animated conversation pervaded and an uplifting and compelling program mixed a strong message about the mission of the Schwartz Center with the importance of the role of women in health care. Recognizing the significant collective accomplishments of the women in the room were **Elaine Ullian**, President and CEO of Boston Medical Center and **Paula Johnson, MD**, Schwartz Center Board member and Executive Director of the Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"My friend, like Ken [Schwartz], surrounded herself with caregivers she trusted: men and women who would be honest with her, and partners in managing her disease – every aspect of it." – Jeanne Blake

Featured speaker **Jeanne Blake**, former television medical reporter and President of Family Health Productions, Inc., received heartfelt accolades for her poignant talk about the power of the human connection in the patient/caregiver relationship and how it can ease emotional and physical pain.



Jeanne Blake and Carol Schwartz, mother of Ken Schwartz and Schwartz Center Board member, bonded as they discovered they shared similar experiences.

Touchpoints

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

The July issue of *Oncology Times* published an article on the Schwartz Center Rounds,



Armstrong

quoting Board members **Thomas Lynch, MD**, and **Mimi Bartholomay, RN**, and Administrative Director **Marjorie Stanzler ... Mimi Bartholomay** was honored by the *Boston Globe's BostonWorks Salute to Nurses*. She was one of three nurses recognized this spring for her dedication to the nursing profession



Sellers

and compassion for her patients ... In June the Schwartz Center Board added four new members: **Beverly Armstrong**, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Paratek Pharmaceuticals; **Thomas Sellers**, Chief Financial Officer, American Cancer Society, New England Division; **Kate Walsh**, Chief Operating Officer, Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research; and



Walsh

Lynn Wiatrowski, Executive Vice President, FleetBoston ... In April *The Patriot Ledger* published a feature story on the Schwartz Center grant to the **Institute of Health Professions**. The article



Wiatrowski

focused on **Rosanna DeMarco, PhD, RN**, Boston College, Connell School of Nursing, a cancer survivor and co-investigator on the study of nurses who survived cancer and the effect of this experience on their relationships with patients. **Marjorie Stanzler** was quoted in the story. The grant was the subject of the video, *Bridging Two Worlds*, shown at the Schwartz Center's 2002 annual dinner. The Center recently sent the video and an accompanying study guide to every nursing school in the country.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you are interested in helping on October 23, 2003, the night of the **Schwartz Center's annual dinner**, please call Sarah Levenson at 617-724-7576. Volunteers are needed to staff the registration tables, greet guests and guide them to their seats. All volunteers are invited to stay for dinner and enjoy the program and the entertainment.

For your convenience, we have enclosed an envelope should you wish to make a donation to the Schwartz Center.

You may also donate by credit card via www.theschwartzcenter.org
Thank you for your support.

— Our Health Care World

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What makes this crisis particularly relevant for our mission is that lower patient-to-nurse ratios increase opportunities for nurses to connect and communicate with patients. The challenge is how to support these moments of engagement when time is costly.

Ways the Schwartz Center has responded include: highlighting the critical contributions of nurses; funding nursing-specific educational opportunities for enhancing communication with patients; and working with health care leadership to keep the patient experience at the center of all decision-making, particularly when balancing cost, health care staffing issues, and quality of care.

The nursing shortage is real, but where there are challenges there are opportunities. The reports cited above describe the type of practice environments that lead to nurse retention, satisfaction and better patient outcomes. Taking license with a quote from anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed 'caregivers' can change the 'system'; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Executive Director