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Boston Medical Center Emergency Medicine Doctor Receives
2014 Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award®
Dr. Thea James honored at Schwartz Center dinner before nearly 2,000 attendees

Boston, MA (November 21, 2014) – The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a patient-founded nonprofit dedicated to nurturing patient and caregiver relationships to strengthen the human connection at the heart of healthcare, has named Thea James, MD, as the recipient of its 2014 Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award®. Her selection was announced November 20 at the 19th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner in Boston before an audience of nearly 2,000 healthcare leaders, practicing clinicians, patients and family members.

Dr. James, who has dedicated her life to reducing community violence and healthcare disparities among vulnerable populations, practices emergency medicine at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and co-founded its Violence Intervention Advocacy Program (VIAP), which provides victims and perpetrators of violence with services that facilitate healing and discourage retaliation.

"She has a natural ability to normalize events for people in crisis, and provide a safe environment free of judgment, shame and fear," said a colleague of Dr. James. "It is this very environment that cultivates hope and promotes the physical, mental and spiritual wellness of our patients."

During her remarks at the dinner, Dr. James called her patients and their families her "teachers," who have given her their trust, support and who have also imparted profound lessons. "At Boston Medical Center, some of our patients are challenging. But given any opportunity, our patients would not choose to suffer," said Dr. James. "We practice our own brand of medicine to mitigate suffering. Our approach is to know the patient—their barriers, their resources, how they see their disease, what they believe in and, equally important, what they don't believe."

According to Schwartz Center Executive Director Julie Rosen, "Dr. James interacts with patients in a truly authentic and compassionate manner. She sees the person behind each injury and searches for that person's story. Her sensitivity, communications skills, optimism and kindness have deeply impacted the lives of her patients and families. We're so pleased to honor her and our extraordinary finalists."

In addition to her work at BMC, Dr. James co-founded Unified for Global Healing, a foundation aimed at improving health outcomes across the globe. She has provided emergency medical care to victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, and earthquake victims in Iran and Haiti.

A resident of Cambridge, Mass., Dr. James is a graduate of Georgetown University and is an associate professor of emergency medicine at Boston University School of Medicine.

The Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award was established in 1999 to recognize healthcare providers who demonstrate extraordinary compassion in caring for patients and families. The finalists were chosen by a review committee based on how well they embody the characteristics of compassionate care, which include effective communication and emotional support, mutual trust and respect, involving patients and families in healthcare decisions, and treating patients as people, not just illnesses.

The other four finalists for this year's award, who were also honored at the dinner, are:

- **Scot Bateman, MD, of UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts,** director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit where he cares for seriously ill children and young adults.

- **Cranberry Hospice & Palliative Care Team at Beth Israel Deaconess-Plymouth in Plymouth, Massachusetts,** which provides hospice and palliative care to patients and families in their own home or any other place they call home.

- **Deborah Ferretti, MS, APRN, of The Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain, Connecticut,** a nurse practitioner on the Wolfson Palliative Care Team who provides care and works with patients and their families to make end-of-life decisions.

- **Kathryn Pratt, RN, BSN, of Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven in New Haven, Connecticut,** a nurse coordinator in the stem cell transplant unit who works with cancer patients undergoing autologous transplant.

The award recipient receives a $5,000 cash prize, and the four finalists receive $1,000 each.

The Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award is made possible through the generous support of Johnson & Johnson and Novo Nordisk.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare
The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare (www.theschwartzcenter.org) is a patient-founded nonprofit dedicated to nurturing patient and caregiver relationships to strengthen the human connection at the heart of healthcare. The Schwartz Center was founded in 1995 by Ken Schwartz, a Boston healthcare attorney who died of lung cancer at the age of 40 and found that what mattered most was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers. He established the Schwartz Center just days before his death to ensure that all patients and families receive compassionate care.

The Center's signature program is the Schwartz Center Rounds®, which has been adopted by more than 400 hospitals and other healthcare organizations in the U.S., U.K. and Canada. The program provides an opportunity for caregivers to come together on a regular basis to discuss the most difficult emotional and social issues they face in caring for patients. It has been found to enhance compassionate care, improve teamwork, and reduce caregiver stress and isolation. The Center also develops and funds other innovative programs, recognizes and honors outstanding caregivers, and works to make compassionate care a national healthcare priority.

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