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2015 Schwartz Center National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award Finalists Announced

*Award-winning author Atul Gawande to present the inaugural NCCY Award
at the 20th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner*

BOSTON (Sept. 10, 2015)—The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a national nonprofit leading the movement to bring compassion to every patient-caregiver interaction, has selected six healthcare providers throughout the U.S. for its prestigious Schwartz Center National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award. The 2015 award recipient will be announced on Nov. 18, 2015 at the 20th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner in Boston before an audience of more than 2,000 healthcare leaders, caregivers and patients. Award-winning author Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, will present the inaugural NCCY Award as the event’s honorary speaker.

This year marks the Schwartz Center’s 20th anniversary and the national expansion of the NCCY Award program, which was established to elevate excellence in compassionate care. For the past 16 years, the Schwartz Center has honored outstanding healthcare providers who display extraordinary devotion and compassion in caring for patients and families.

“These six exceptional caregivers were selected as the 2015 NCCY Award finalists because they epitomize compassionate care through their dedication in providing patients and families with emotional support, mutual trust, respect and compassion,” said Julie Rosen, Executive Director of the Schwartz Center. “We look to honor these special caregivers for the difference they are making in countless lives and for serving as national champions in building a culture of compassion in healthcare.”

The 2015 NCCY Award finalists are:

- **Rick Boyte, MD, of The University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss.**, a pediatric palliative and critical care physician, who provides unwavering care for chronically ill children. “Dr. Boyte is the most selfless and caring person I’ve met,” said a resident. “He cares more about patients than protocols and more about residents than research. Here was someone I could learn from—here was a man worth emulating. Many doctors can claim to have saved a life—very few can say they healed another’s spirit.”

- **Melody J. Cunningham, MD, of Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.**, a pediatric palliative care and hematology/oncology physician, is the Medical Director of Threads of Care, the hospital’s palliative care program. “Melody’s character shines through her every action and her kindness is immeasurable,” said a former patient’s parent. “Her compassion for treating the whole family can not be put into words.”
- **Cheryl D. Kane, MEd, BSN, RN, of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program in Boston, Mass.**, is the Director of Nursing at the Barbara McInnis House, where she cares for homeless men and women in the greater Boston area. “Strong relationships of trust are a hallmark of the care Cheryl provides,” said a colleague. “It is Cheryl to whom we turn to instill and nurture that same sense of compassion in the next generation of nurses in our program.”
- **Krista Nelson, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C, of Providence Cancer Center in Portland, Ore.**, an oncology social worker dedicated to instilling hope in her patients, their families and her colleagues. “She finds power and strength in her patients,” said a colleague. “She works with them to maximize their strengths so they may achieve their hopes and dreams.”
- **Jayne O’Malley, BSN, RN, OCN, of Orange Regional Medical Center in Middletown, N.Y.**, a lung, head and neck cancer navigator who works to meet the needs of patients with serious diagnoses and find ways to ease the burden of their treatment process. “It was obvious how much Jayne cared for my mom. She treated her with kindness, respect and love; her compassion was unending,” said a patient’s daughter.
- **Terry Yoas, CNA, of Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa, Calif.**, a care partner who works hard to create a welcoming and caring “second home” for the organization’s patients. “He ensures the dignity of our patients by going the extra step to make a connection with each person at an individual level,” said a colleague.

The award recipient will receive a \$5,000 monetary prize, and the five finalists will receive \$1,000 each.

Chairing this year’s Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner are: Marna Borgstrom, President and CEO, Yale-New Haven Hospital Health System; Ruth Kilduff, Chairman, Integro Insurance Brokers; Stacey Lucchino; Clare Reilly; and Mark E. Reynolds, President, CRICO.

More information about the award and dinner is available at theschwartzcenter.org/award.

The Schwartz Center National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award is made possible through the generous support of Modern Healthcare, the media sponsor of this year’s award.

About the NCCY Award

The Schwartz Center National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award is a national recognition program that elevates excellence in compassionate healthcare. Every year since 1999, the Schwartz Center has honored caregivers who embody the characteristics of compassionate care, which include effective communication, emotional support, mutual trust and respect, the involvement of families in healthcare decisions, and treating patients as people, not just illnesses. This year's expansion of the award marks the award's 16th year, its first year as a national distinction, and coincides with the Schwartz Center's 20th anniversary.

Visit theschwartzcenter.org/award for award details.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare is a national nonprofit leading the movement to bring compassion to every patient-caregiver interaction. Now in its 20th year, the Schwartz Center has more than 375 member healthcare organizations in the U.S. and Canada, in addition to more than 100 sites in the U.K. that conduct its signature Schwartz Center Rounds[®] program. Research shows that when caregivers are compassionate, patients do better and caregivers rediscover their passion for healing. The Center believes that a strong patient-caregiver relationship characterized by effective communication, emotional support, mutual trust and respect, and the involvement of families in healthcare decisions is fundamental to high-quality healthcare. For more information, visit theschwartzcenter.org and follow the Center on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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