



## **2017 National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award Finalists Announced**

*~ Six exceptional caregivers from across the country are selected as finalists for 2017 NCCY Award ~*

*NCCY Award finalists to be honored at the  
22nd Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner*

**BOSTON (Sept. 28, 2017)**—The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a national leader in the movement to make compassion a vital element in every patient-caregiver interaction, has selected six finalists from across the U.S. for the 2017 National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award. These finalists represent healthcare professionals who make a profound difference through their unmatched dedication to compassionate, collaborative care.

From these six finalists, the 2017 award recipient will be selected and announced on Nov. 16, 2017 at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner in Boston. More than 1,800 healthcare leaders, caregivers and patients are expected to attend this event to recognize the critical role of healthcare professionals, and the exceptional work of the 2017 NCCY Award recipient who epitomizes compassionate care. This year, the keynote speech will be presented by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker.

The award is a national recognition program that acknowledges excellence in compassionate healthcare. The recipient of the NCCY award embodies the characteristics of compassionate care which include effective communications, emotional support, mutual trust and respect, the involvement of families in healthcare decisions and treating patients as people, not just as an illness.

Since 1999, the Schwartz Center has honored outstanding healthcare professionals who display extraordinary devotion and compassion in caring for patients and families. Finalists are chosen by a national review committee, which includes past award recipients, in collaboration with representatives from the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association.

“We are thrilled to honor this year’s remarkable caregivers as the 2017 NCCY Award finalists,” said Ruth Kilduff, RN, Chair of the Schwartz Center Board. “Their dedication to engaging patients and families with respect, dignity and compassion is immeasurable; they truly encompass what compassionate care really is.”

The 2017 NCCY Award finalists are:

- **Rana Awdish, MD of Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan**, a critical care medicine physician and director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Program, Dr. Awdish has written and spoken nationally about her experiences as a patient in her own institution when she suffered a serious illness. Dr. Awdish has used her unique perspective of both physician and patient to address the gaps in the patient-caregiver relationship through communication and empathy initiatives as well as to highlight the importance of patient-centered care to the well-being and resilience of the healthcare workforce. As one patient said, “Never have I met a doctor so genuine, so caring and so determined to help me. Dr. Awdish didn't just care about my condition, she cared about me as an individual.”
- **Jonathan Bartels, RN of University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville, Virginia**, a nurse with over 20 years of experience in emergency, trauma, oncology and palliative care, Mr. Bartels has gained national recognition for his work in developing a practice implemented by the care team after the death of a patient simply called “The Pause.” It is a means of transitioning and demarcating the brevity and importance of this moment. The Pause is a means of honoring a person’s last rite of passage and an opportunity for healthcare professionals to come together amidst suffering and loss. As one colleague writes, “He is a listener, an inspirational leader of fierce compassion, and he is making an impact with one unique intervention among many, to ease suffering for families and healthcare providers.”
- **Victor Fagan, LPN of VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**, is a licensed practical nurse in primary care working on behalf of veterans. On any given day, Mr. Fagan interacts with multiple patients providing assessment and education to veterans and family members. Colleagues, patients and families alike all recognize Victor as an exceptional caregiver who honors veterans on their birthdays, buys clothes for patients and families in need and even gives gifts of appreciation for co-workers who demonstrate exceptional acts of compassionate care towards veterans. He inspires similar passion amongst his colleagues; as one said, “If we need someone to listen, really listen, Victor is the one to go to.”
- **Terrie Inder, MBChB, MD of Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts**, is an internationally renowned researcher, neonatologist and pediatric neurologist with over 20 years in the field of Neonatology. As chair of the department of pediatric newborn medicine, Dr. Inder is leading the development of an innovative NICU that promotes family-centered care. As one colleague writes, “She believes compassionate care—delivered in the right way, at the right time, by the right people—is just as vital to an infant’s survival and success as the medicine and devices doctors use to treat them. For this reason, she is changing the way doctors all over the world treat high-risk infants.” Although she leads the department which cares for nearly 3,000 premature and seriously ill babies each year while continuing her groundbreaking research, she

still makes time to personally meet with parents and their babies. She sits bedside, reassuring parents and counseling them about their important role in their child's development.

- **Lynne McAtee-Harris, RN of Boulder Community Health in Boulder, Colorado**, is an ICU nurse with over 25 years of experience caring for seriously ill patients. Her personal commitment to making compassion a priority in her organization has fostered greater resiliency among caregivers, which makes them better equipped to provide the highest quality care to patients and families. Lynne spearheaded creation of an annual Compassionate Care Symposium that provides an in-depth focus on issues such as mindfulness, patient-centered communications and diversity. One colleague writes, "Lynne has touched the lives of countless patients and staff members, but more importantly she has changed the culture of Boulder Community Health by weaving compassionate care into the fabric of our institution." Lynne's passion for prioritizing caregiver well-being and clarifying its connection to patient outcomes and family experience has had a pronounced impact and been warmly and widely recognized across Boulder Community Health.
- **Alan Rosenthal, MD of Cleveland Clinic Children's in Cleveland, Ohio**, is a pediatrician with over 25 years of experience caring for children and their families. He is known throughout the Cleveland community as a role model for students and colleagues alike as a compassionate, caring and genuine caregiver. One patient wrote about Dr. Rosenthal, "He feels the worry and desperation that his patients and their parents feel when their children are not well...He encouraged me, supported me, always treated me with respect and most of all, he believed in me when no one else did." Throughout his career, Dr. Rosenthal has led by example in attending to his patients' human needs as much as the medical ones, fostering relationships that go far beyond traditional medical training. The result of which are patients and families who universally view him with such deep love and trust that he is often considered as much a part of their family as their physician.

"The Schwartz Center recognizes caregivers each year through their NCCY program to help show others that compassionate care can make an enormous difference to patients, families, colleagues and their communities," said Ellen Cohen, the Schwartz Center Board President. "By honoring these special caregivers and sharing their stories, we can illustrate the impact of compassion on the lives of others."

More information about the award and dinner is available at [theschwartzcenter.org/award](https://theschwartzcenter.org/award).

### **About the NCCY Award**

The Schwartz Center's National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award is a national recognition program that elevates excellence in compassionate healthcare. 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. Award finalists are chosen by a national review committee, which includes past award recipients, in collaboration with representatives from the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association.

Visit [theschwartzcenter.org/award](http://theschwartzcenter.org/award) for details. Read more about the finalists and honorable mentions at: [theschwartzcenter.org/supporting-caregivers/nccy-award/2017-award-finalists](http://theschwartzcenter.org/supporting-caregivers/nccy-award/2017-award-finalists)

### **About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare**

Established in 1995, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a leader in the movement to make compassion a vital element in every patient-caregiver interaction, was founded on the belief that greater compassion and more meaningful collaboration are fundamental to the kind of care clinicians want to deliver and patients want to receive.

The Schwartz Center is an independent, non-profit organization, with more than 550 organizational members in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Ireland, Australia and New Zealand supporting 265,000 healthcare professionals each year. Schwartz Center members rely on our programs, education and resources to support clinician well-being, enhance the quality of care, enable better outcomes and create a more positive and rewarding experience for all members of the care team, patients and their families. The innovative Schwartz Rounds<sup>®</sup> unites caregivers from a range of disciplines to share experiences, learn from each other and focus on the human dimension of medicine.

The Center's Compassion in Action Healthcare Conference ([compassioninactionconference.org](http://compassioninactionconference.org)) brings together clinicians, patients and families, health system leadership and others to advance a common goal of delivering more compassionate, collaborative care.

To help patients and family members acknowledge their caregivers who epitomize the qualities of compassionate care the Schwartz Center established the Honor Your Caregiver program.

Visit us at [theschwartzcenter.org](http://theschwartzcenter.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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