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IOM President to Speak at Schwartz Center Consensus Meeting November 8

Attendees to discuss how to make compassionate care a national healthcare priority

Boston, MA (November 6, 2012) – Institute of Medicine President Harvey Fineberg, MD, PhD, will give the plenary address at a consensus meeting in Boston November 8-9 being convened by the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare to develop recommendations on health system reforms and public and professional education initiatives to make compassionate care a national priority. His topic will be system properties that support compassionate care.

The IOM is the health arm of the National Academy of Sciences and provides unbiased and authoritative advice on health and healthcare issues to decision makers and the public. Its reports, including *To Err is Human* and *The Quality Chasm*, are widely credited with having spurred significant quality and safety improvements in the U.S. healthcare system.

The meeting is being held as part of the Schwartz Center's National Consensus Project on Compassionate Healthcare, a far-reaching initiative to make compassionate care a national healthcare priority. **The plenary session will take place on Thursday, November 8, from 12:30-2 at the Boston Convention Center and will be open to the press.** Schwartz Center Medical Director Beth Lown, MD, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and internist at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, will introduce Dr. Fineberg.

The session will be attended by 65 healthcare providers, patients, educators, researchers and policymakers from across the country, including representatives from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the HHS Office of Health Reform, the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation, the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care, and Geisinger Health System, among many others.

According to Dr. Lown, "The nation's health and the effectiveness of our healthcare system depend to a large extent on the quality of the relationships and communication that patients have with their clinicians and other caregivers. Unfortunately, in many cases, our healthcare system does not enable caregivers to establish strong relationships that promote health and quality of life. This results in poorer health outcomes, lack of adherence to treatment recommendations, lower patient satisfaction, and higher costs. It is our goal to change this."

The Schwartz Center defines compassionate care as consisting of the relational aspects of patient- and family-centered care, including effective communication, emotional support,

mutual trust and respect, involving patients and families in healthcare decisions, and attending to patients' physical comfort and needs.

In a national poll conducted by the Schwartz Center in 2010, 84% of recently hospitalized patients said they believe that compassionate care makes a difference in how well patients recover from illness, while 81% said that compassionate care can determine whether a patient lives or dies. Yet only about half of patients surveyed said that most healthcare professionals provide such care. The results were published in the September 2011 issue of *Health Affairs*, the nation's leading health policy journal.

According to Dr. Lown, "The goals of our National Consensus Project are to ensure that compassionate care is a fundamental element in the design of healthcare systems, the provision of care, the measurement of healthcare quality and outcomes, and the education of all healthcare professionals. The well-being of each and every one of us, our loved ones and the American public depends on it."

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About the Schwartz Center

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare (www.theschwartzcenter.org) is a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their clinical caregivers. The Center reflects the vision of Ken Schwartz, 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's signature program is Schwartz Center Rounds, which allow caregivers from multiple disciplines to come together on a regular basis to discuss the most challenging emotional and social issues they face in caring for patients. The program has been adopted by hundreds of healthcare institutions in the U.S. and U.K. It has been shown to enhance compassion, improve teamwork, and reduce caregiver stress. It has also led to the adoption of more patient-centered practices and policies in many healthcare institutions.