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Schwartz Center Announces 2012 Grants

\$227,660 awarded to projects that promote compassionate care

Boston, MA (June 28, 2012) – The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers, has announced the awarding of \$227,660 in grants to seven organizations in six states.

Schwartz Center grants are intended to improve communication skills, cultural competency, spirituality, and end-of-life care. In addition, for the past several years, the Center has encouraged grant proposals to support programs that utilize patients and family members as educators. Since 1997, the Schwartz Center has awarded more than \$2 million in grants to healthcare organizations throughout the U.S.

This year, grants have been awarded to the following:

Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth (Hanover, NH) – awarded \$50,000 to develop a curriculum for medical students integrating patient care with the science of medicine, as an adaptation of Schwartz Center Educational Rounds.

Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (Harrisburg, PA) – awarded \$50,000 to expand its successful Patients with Disabilities as Teachers (P-DAT) program, which engages patients with disabilities and their families in sharing their personal stories with third- and fourth-year medical students, to nine medical schools in Pennsylvania, including a train-the-trainer component. The Schwartz Center provided the initial funding for the program.

University of Washington (Seattle, WA) – awarded \$50,000 to support a summit of leaders to share best practices in disseminating its successful “Oncotalk” curriculum to improve clinicians' ability to communicate with cancer patients and create new online tools for exchanging and disseminating best practices. This grant was given in honor of Laurie Schwartz Naparstek, a Schwartz Center founder and longtime board member, who died of cancer in December 2011 and believed deeply in the importance of conveying difficult news compassionately.

Cambridge Health Alliance (Cambridge, MA) – awarded \$35,000 to develop a compassionate care core curriculum for medical residents and clinical staff utilizing patient stories from the health system’s Patient and Family Advisory Council and video vignettes of culturally diverse patients to further promote its system-wide initiative to provide care in a patient-centered medical home model.

Saint Alphonsus Medical Group (Boise, ID) – awarded \$30,460 to develop a train-the-trainer curriculum for patient health advisors and support training for healthcare providers in understanding the cultures of refugee families.

The Conversation Project (Cambridge, MA) – awarded \$10,000 to support a public campaign to ensure that patients’ end-of-life wishes are expressed and respected. This project has been initiated by Ellen Goodman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, speaker and commentator, in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI).

Community Health Network (Indianapolis, IN) – awarded \$2,200 to develop a team intervention to improve communication, patient safety and conflict resolution.

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare (www.theschwartzcenter.org) was founded in 1995 by Ken Schwartz, a Boston healthcare attorney who died of lung cancer at age 40 and found that what mattered to him most as a patient was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers, which he said “made the unbearable bearable.” 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 Schwartz Center Rounds®, which has been adopted by hundreds of hospitals and other healthcare institutions across the country. The program provides an opportunity for caregivers from multiple disciplines 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.

In addition to Rounds, the Schwartz Center develops and funds other innovative programs, recognizes and honors outstanding caregivers, and supports policies that promote and advance compassionate, patient- and family-centered care.

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