



The Schwartz Center Names Recipients of the 2023 National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award

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Six NCCY Award Recipients honored at the 28th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner

BOSTON (Nov. 10, 2023)—[The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare](#), a national nonprofit dedicated to putting compassion at the heart of healthcare, has selected six recipients from across the U.S. for the 2023 [National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® \(NCCY\) Award](#). The NCCY Award celebrates extraordinary healthcare professionals and teams who display extraordinary compassion in the care of their patients, colleagues and their communities.

The recipients were honored at the 28th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner on Nov. 9, 2023, in Boston, Mass. Healthcare leaders, clinicians and supporters attended this event, which was co-chaired by **Sree Chaguturu, MD**, executive vice president and chief medical officer of CVS Health, **Susan Donahue**, and **Peter Slavin, MD**, operating partner of Advent International and former president of Massachusetts General Hospital.

“It is truly a privilege to honor the dedicated care and compassion the 2023 NCCY Award recipients provide their patients and each other, especially in the face of the challenges we see in healthcare today,” said Elizabeth Hickman, Schwartz Center interim CEO and COO. “We are inspired by their exquisite acts of kindness and commitment to advancing systems-level change to improve care at both a personal and community level.”

Keynote remarks were given by **John Berman**, anchor of CNN. He shared reflections on our healthcare system and his personal health experience while running the Boston Marathon. To learn more, please visit theschwartzcenter.org/dinner2023.

“The 2023 NCCY Award Recipients are leading the way in addressing healthcare inequities that were exacerbated by the pandemic,” said Mark E. Reynolds, chair of the Schwartz Center Board and President and CEO of CRICO. “These visionary change-makers are addressing social determinants of health by increasing access to care in underserved communities, and are building programs to reduce stigma and support the most vulnerable populations. Together, we celebrate their incredible dedication.”

The 2023 NCCY Award recipients are:

- **Kristy Capps, BSN, RN**, Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, Wash. – As the Population Health community nurse case manager, Kristy spends most of her time in the community caring for their most vulnerable populations including those who are unhoused. Together with her team, they spearhead various health equity programs, including a mobile outreach clinic with community health workers reaching the undocumented and chronically underserved Hispanic population. They also secure wrap-around services for justice-involved patients.
- **Laura Harmon, MD**, Boulder Community Health, Boulder, Colo. – Dr. Harmon is a trauma surgeon and chair of the department of surgery. By integrating evidence-based, trauma-informed care into everyday practice, Dr. Harmon has transformed their model of care for patients experiencing trauma. She has created a trauma outpatient program that anchors their care, providing them with access to a multidisciplinary team who address the sequelae of trauma. Dr. Harmon has also created healing spaces for staff through debriefing sessions, as well as for the community by hosting the inaugural regional Trauma Symposium focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Kathryn Kirkland, MD**, Dartmouth Health, N.H. – Dr. Kirkland serves as the section chief and director of palliative medicine. In addition to the compassionate care she provides patients facing serious illness and their families, she supports the community by designing events like the first-ever Walk of Remembrance to honor loved ones who have died. A skilled communicator, Dr. Kirkland has incorporated narrative medicine into every aspect of her work, using reading and writing exercises to help interprofessional teams develop and practice skills like attentive listening, curiosity, perspective-taking, and tolerance for uncertainty—all critical in providing compassionate care to patients.
- **Assumptah “Summie” Mwai, CHPNA**, Care Dimensions, Mass. – As a senior hospice aide, Summie is devoted to making a difference and enriching the quality of life of her patients and their families. A selfless and empathetic caregiver, she compassionately promotes peace and comfort at the end of life. Many who have received her care describe her as part of the family. She also serves as a preceptor for newly hired hospice aides, helping to mentor the next generation of compassionate caregivers.
- **Sonia Sutherland, MD**, Medical Director, Detention Health, Contra Costa Health, Calif. – Dr. Sutherland is an internal medicine physician and the medical director of Detention Health. She also has served as Northern California’s physician for Hansen’s disease (leprosy). Through her work, Dr. Sutherland aims to restore the justice-involved population so they may reunite with family and break the generational cycle. She is also one of the founders of the Wellness Team, which supports the wellness of 4,000 employees to address burnout and enhance resiliency.

- **The Complex Discharge Team**, led by Padmaja Gaddam, UK Healthcare, Good Samaritan Hospital, Ky. – Created in 2015, the Complex Discharge Team provides specialized care to patients with complex socioeconomic backgrounds and discharge needs on one dedicated unit. Many patients have mental health conditions or are unhoused, and they often stay on the unit for many weeks or even beyond a year. The multidisciplinary team works collaboratively to provide excellent, compassionate care as well as a variety of activities that bring joy to patients. Thanks to the dedicated care on this unit, the team has achieved strong patient safety and health outcomes, including no hospital-acquired infections or falls with injuries for two consecutive years, and a significant reduction in pressure injuries.

About the National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award

Since 1999, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare has honored outstanding healthcare professionals who display extraordinary devotion and compassion in caring for patients and families.

The National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award recognizes extraordinary healthcare professionals from across the country who embody the characteristics of compassionate care and whose professional achievements have helped to create healing healthcare environments for patients, families, colleagues, and communities. Award finalists are chosen by a national review committee.

The Schwartz Center is grateful to CRICO for its generous support of the National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year Award.

Visit theschwartzcenter.org/award for details.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

Founded in 1995, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare is a national organization whose mission is to put compassion at the heart of healthcare through programs, education and advocacy. The challenges facing healthcare professionals on the front lines of caring for us all during this global health crisis are unprecedented.

The Schwartz Center has more than 600 member healthcare organizations across 45 states in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The benefits of membership extend to all staff within the member organization. There are also more than 290 healthcare organizations in the U.K. and Ireland conducting the Schwartz Rounds program through a partnership.

Our evidence-informed programs and resources have proven to be versatile, sustainable and effective across diverse settings, including acute care and rehabilitation hospitals, outpatient clinics, cancer centers, Veteran's Administration medical centers, organ procurement organizations, nursing homes, hospice providers and health insurers.

Schwartz Center members rely on our offerings to support clinician mental health and 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.

We partner with healthcare organizations and systems to achieve a shared vision of a world where all who seek and provide care experience compassion.

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

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