

The Schwartz Center Names First Recipient of its National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award

Award-winning author Atul Gawande presented the NCCY Award to Dr. Rick Boyte of The University of Mississippi Medical Center at the Schwartz Center's 20th annual dinner

BOSTON (Nov. 19, 2015)—The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a national nonprofit leading the movement to bring compassion to every patient-caregiver interaction, has named Rick Boyte, MD, as the inaugural Schwartz Center National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award recipient. Award-winning author Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, presented the award at the 20th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner on Nov. 18, where Dr. Boyte was honored in front of 2,000 healthcare leaders, clinicians, patients and family members.

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.

Dr. Boyte currently serves as a physician and division chief of pediatric palliative medicine at Batson Children's Hospital at The University of Mississippi Medical Center, and is responsible for starting the pediatric intensive care unit and forming the palliative care team at the hospital. Dr. Boyte also chairs the hospital's Ethics Committee and leads its Schwartz Center Rounds® program.

"Dr. Boyte listened to us and got to know us and our heart's desires for our precious daughter," said a patient's mother. "He was sensitive to our every emotion, from joy, celebration and hope, to sorrow, grief and pain. He supported us in unimaginable ways. And I'm sure he would say he was just doing his job."

During his remarks at the dinner, Dr. Boyte conveyed that the ability to express compassion is within all of us. Compassion always matters and can make a profound difference for patients. And to Dr. Boyte, his patients have always been his greatest source of inspiration. "I share this honor with my colleagues back home, and I also share it with those who most inspire my work—my patients and their families," said Dr. Boyte. "They are my heroes and the most courageous people I've ever met. They're just getting through their lives. And the love and devotion I've seen from families is amazing."

“Twenty years ago, the Schwartz Center was born from the experience of one patient, whose gratitude for his clinician’s simple act of kindness helped make ‘the unbearable bearable.’ Since then, we have made it our mission to ensure that compassionate care becomes an essential element in the delivery of care and a priority in every organization dedicated to healing,” said Julie Rosen, Executive Director of the Schwartz Center. “We’re pleased to honor Dr. Rick Boyte and our extraordinary NCCY Award finalists for their unmatched dedication to caring for patients and families and for serving as national champions of compassionate healthcare.”

The five 2015 NCCY Award finalists are:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Terry Yoas, CNA, of Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa, Calif.,** a care partner who works hard to create a welcoming and caring environment for the organization’s patients.

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

The Schwartz Center NCCY 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 120 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](#).

###