



News Release

SCHWARTZ CENTER RECEIVES \$500,000 GRANT FROM THE AMGEN FOUNDATION

Funds Support Expanded Efforts to Make Compassionate, Patient-Centered Care a National Healthcare Priority

BOSTON and THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (March 6, 2012) The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a Boston-based nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers, today announced it has received a \$500,000 grant from the Amgen Foundation. This grant will go toward the planned expansion of Schwartz Center Rounds® and to support the launch of a National Consensus Project.

These initiatives aim to make compassionate, patient-centered care a national healthcare priority. The Schwartz Center Rounds 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 National Consensus Project will convene a broad range of stakeholders to define compassionate care, develop best practices to ensure that this type of care is provided, and develop a plan to implement these core principles and best practices.

“This grant, the largest in our history, will make it possible for us to double the number of Rounds sites overall in California and the Washington, D.C. area and to expand the program to additional cancer centers throughout the United States,” said Julie Rosen, executive director, Schwartz Center. “It will also allow us to launch our National Consensus Project to ensure that all patients receive compassionate care – something that is particularly important now as our healthcare system is changing and providers are under such intense pressure to reduce costs, while improving quality.”

The Amgen Foundation, based in Thousand Oaks, is the philanthropic arm of Amgen, the world’s largest biotechnology company. A key area of focus for the Foundation is ensuring quality of care and access for patients with an emphasis on patient empowerment and reducing healthcare disparities.

“The Schwartz Center provides health professionals with a practical avenue to reflect upon and manage through the complexities inherent in providing care for seriously ill patients,” said Jean Lim Terra, president, Amgen Foundation. “We are proud to support these programs that empower healthcare professionals to truly fulfill their mission to deliver quality care for patients.”

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Schwartz Center Rounds are currently held at 247 hospitals and other healthcare institutions in 35 states in the United States (U.S.) and at 11 hospitals in the United Kingdom. A comprehensive evaluation has shown that caregivers who attend multiple Rounds sessions feel more compassionate toward their patients and less stressed. Attendees also report that the program has improved teamwork and resulted in system changes.

Through its National Consensus Project, the Schwartz Center will launch a national conversation about the importance of compassionate care by convening healthcare professionals, patients, policymakers, educators and researchers to reach expert consensus on a definition of compassionate care, develop a set of organizational and institutional best practices to ensure that this type of care is provided, and develop a plan for disseminating these core principles and best practices.

According to Rosen, “Our vision is a healthcare system in which all patients receive compassionate, patient- and family-centered care, and all caregivers are supported to provide it. We are grateful to the Amgen Foundation for helping us to make this vision a reality.”

The Schwartz Center’s vision is based on the experience of Ken Schwartz, a well-known Boston healthcare attorney who died of lung cancer at the age of 40 and found that what mattered to him most as a patient was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers, which he wrote in the *Boston Globe Magazine* “made the unbearable bearable.” He founded the Schwartz Center in 1995 to ensure that all patients receive compassionate care.

In a national survey conducted by the Schwartz Center in 2010, more than 80 percent of patients said they believe that effective communication and emotional support – the essential elements of compassionate care – make a difference in how well patients recover from illness and can even make a difference in whether a patient lives or dies. Yet, patients’ ratings of how well their caregivers demonstrated these attributes fell short of their expectations and only about half of patients rated the U.S. healthcare system as a compassionate one.

The Amgen Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the Schwartz Center, having previously provided financial support for Schwartz Center Rounds in 2004 and then again in 2009.

About the Amgen Foundation

The Amgen Foundation (www.amgen.com/citizenship/overview.html) seeks to advance science education; improve patient access to quality care; and strengthen the communities where Amgen staff members live and work. Since 1991, the Foundation has made nearly \$180 million in grants to local, regional, and national nonprofit organizations that impact society in inspiring and innovative ways. It has also supported disaster relief efforts both domestically and internationally. Follow us on www.twitter.com/AmgenFoundation.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

The Schwartz Center (www.theschwartzcenter.org) is a national nonprofit organization that develops and funds innovative programs to promote compassionate care, recognizes and honors caregivers who demonstrate extraordinary compassion in caring for patients and families, and supports policies that promote compassionate care. Its “Agenda for Improving Compassionate Care” was published in the September 2010 issue of *Health Affairs*, the nation’s leading health policy journal. The Center is housed at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Follow us on www.twitter.com/kschwartzcenter.

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