



## **SPIRITUAL CARE FELLOWSHIP IN PALLIATIVE CARE INTRODUCED TO BOOST COMPETENCIES, BEST PRACTICES IN TREATING CHRONICALLY ILL**

### ***Mirrors Steady Growth in Palliative Care Programs at Hospitals Nationwide***

**NEW YORK, N.Y.** (June 13, 2016)—The Spiritual Care Association (SCA) today announced that it will begin offering a Spiritual Care Fellowship in Palliative Care for board certified chaplains currently working in a hospice or palliative care setting. It is designed to increase competencies and best practices in caring for people who are seriously or chronically ill and their caregivers, at a time when palliative care is expanding rapidly in the U.S.

The year-long fellowship is an online, cohort-based program built upon an academically rigorous and best practice-informed curriculum. Upon completion, fellows will demonstrate competency in intermediate or advance-level practice according to the competency guidelines for professional chaplains who provide palliative and end-of life care. The educational program will prepare them for specialty certification in palliative/hospice care by certifying bodies, including SCA.

The program was developed by HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN) and is being made available through SCA, an HCCN affiliate. It will be offered twice per year, beginning in September and January, with four to eight selectively-chosen participants in each cohort.

“This new spiritual care fellowship in palliative care holds great promise for raising the bar on this critical component of whole-person care, while also offering professional chaplains the opportunity to gain a career edge in the rapidly growing field of palliative care,” said Rev. Eric J. Hall, president and CEO of HCCN and SCA. “The more that chaplains gain competencies in evidence-based spiritual care, the more that patients and their families ultimately will benefit.”

The National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care, in its third edition of Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care issued in 2013, stated that spirituality is a “fundamental aspect of compassionate, patient- and family-centered care that honors the dignity of all persons.”

Denise Hess, a board certified chaplain whose work in palliative care has been published in peer-reviewed journals, serves as program coordinator. “We believe this fellowship will give highly-motivated chaplains the clinical competencies, skills and confidence to fully integrate into interdisciplinary team and push forward an agenda that advocates for the best possible spiritual support for patients and their families,” she said.

Each fellow will be supervised by a board certified hospice and palliative care chaplain and interdisciplinary team member/on-site supervisor, and participate in weekly, live video conferencing classroom sessions. Learning activities include simulated patient/family interaction role-play, interdisciplinary team building exercises, case presentations, journal article and book reviews, an interdisciplinary team presentation, a quality improvement project, and a publication-ready capstone project.

Introduction of the fellowship aligns with SCA's other educational components that are all built upon an evidence-informed knowledge base and clinical competencies, with the overall goals of transforming the field of spiritual care. HCCN introduced its SCA affiliate in April, marking its debut as the first multidisciplinary, international professional membership association for chaplains and other health care professionals, clergy and organizations that establishes evidence-based quality indicators, scope of practice, and a knowledge base for spiritual care in health care.

For more information, contact [fellowships@spiritualcareassociation.org](mailto:fellowships@spiritualcareassociation.org).

### **About the Spiritual Care Association**

The Spiritual Care Association (SCA) is the first multidisciplinary, international professional membership association for spiritual care providers that establishes evidence-based quality indicators, scope of practice, and a knowledge base for spiritual care in health care. The nonprofit SCA is an affiliate of HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™ (HCCN), a health care nonprofit organization founded in 1961, which provides spiritual care-related information and professional chaplaincy services in hospitals, other health care settings, and online. Visit [www.spiritualcareassociation.org](http://www.spiritualcareassociation.org), call 212-644-1111, and connect with us on [twitter](#) and [facebook](#).

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