



**American Hospital
Association**

NEWS RELEASE

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PROGRAMS BRING INNOVATION TO PALLIATIVE AND END-OF-LIFE CARE

Six Programs Recognized as Circle of Life Honorees

CHICAGO (July 17, 2012) — Three programs that expand the reach of palliative and end-of-life care will be recognized as the 2012 recipients of the Circle of Life Award[®]: Celebrating Innovation in Palliative and End-of-Life Care, along with three others that will be awarded Citations of Honor.

The programs share overriding themes of compassion, dedication and collaboration. **Akron Children's Hospital (Haslinger Family Pediatric Palliative Care Center)** in Akron, Ohio excels in evidence-based clinical care, education and research and has successfully integrated palliative care throughout the whole hospital. **Calvary Hospital** in The Bronx, N.Y. is devoted to providing adult palliative care with an ingrained culture of family-centered care and a strong history of caring for the dying. **Sharp HealthCare** in San Diego, Calif. has developed a model for palliative care in an integrated delivery system that includes strategic integration of palliative care to manage population health, using systematic advance care planning and providing primary care-based palliative care early in the disease trajectory.

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Circle of Life/Page 2

Each of these innovative programs will receive a Circle of Life Award at a ceremony on July 20 in San Francisco.

“A patient needing palliative or end-of-life care faces difficult challenges that must be addressed with unique skills and expertise,” said AHA president and CEO, Rich Umbdenstock. “These organizations exemplify what the health care field is striving for: compassionate care for patients and families at all times. These innovative programs serve as guiding lights for others on this path.”

Citations of Honor were awarded to Community PedsCare of **Community Hospice of Northeast Florida** in Jacksonville, Fla. in recognition of its strong model for a public health approach to palliative care for children with care and education integrated throughout the community; **St. Joseph Hospital** in Orange, Calif. for its palliative care integration across care settings as well as commitment to involving patients and family members in the care process and program design; and **Unity** in De Pere, Wisc. for its caregiver continuity, strong emphasis on employee education and collaboration among local hospitals in extending access to palliative care and hospice services to many rural and isolated communities.

Highlights of the Circle of Life Award programs

Akron Children’s Hospital (Haslinger Pediatric Palliative Care Center) - Akron, Ohio

The comprehensive palliative care program at Akron Children’s is one of the nation’s leading pediatric palliative care programs and is a training site for other organizations seeking specialty training and guidance in developing pediatric palliative care programs. One example of innovative care is the extensive Expressive Therapy Center that was created so patients can experience holistic healing through the arts.

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Circle of Life/Page 3

At Akron Children's palliative care is not considered an "add on" but rather is an intrinsic part of the medical care and key component of the overall planning for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses. The hospital has incorporated a community-based model that offers patients in-hospital consults but also allows much of the care to occur in other settings. Families are able to choose from an array of services that best meets their specific needs.

Calvary – Bronx, N.Y.

Calvary Hospital has a unique and dramatic place in the history of the care of the dying. Long before palliative care became part of mainstream medical care, the concept was in practice at Calvary. The innovations it has developed, informed by a devotion to caring for the dying, are models for other end-of-life programs. Calvary also plays an enormous role in training new practitioners and has a special training program for cancer care technicians, who take on the difficult and time-consuming tasks of the everyday care of cancer patients.

The hospital provides a comprehensive, integrated palliative care program across a continuum including home care, ambulatory services, home hospice and nursing home hospice.

An important aspect of the program is the extensive bereavement program that follows families for 13 months after the loss of a loved one, and many people remain connected with the many weekly support groups that Calvary runs for both the families of its patients and the community at large.

Sharp HealthCare – San Diego, Calif.

Sharp HealthCare is a large integrated health system that successfully helps patients and their families through the physical and emotional pain of a chronic and then life-limiting illness.

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Circle of Life/Page 4

Sharp's system covers the care continuum following patients from one setting to the next, making it easier to provide palliative care whenever it is needed. Palliative care is a strategic priority for the health system.

An evidence-based program was devised to take a population-based approach to identify people at the very beginning of an illness that may prompt a need for palliative services. It focuses on specific diagnoses and manages patients closely to keep them from cycling in and out of the hospital. Sharp has also developed a comprehensive advance care planning consultation program that helps patients and families through planning and decision making at all stages of life.

The Circle of Life Award celebrates programs across the nation that have made great strides in palliative and end-of-life care. This is the thirteenth year for the Circle of Life Award. The 2012 awards are supported, in part, by the California HealthCare Foundation, based in Oakland, Calif., and the Archstone Foundation. Major sponsors are the American Hospital Association, the Catholic Health Association, and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization & National Hospice Foundation. The awards are cosponsored by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the National Association of Social Workers, with additional support from the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association. The Circle of Life Award is a program administered by the Health Research & Educational Trust.

Circle of Life nominations were received and reviewed by a selection committee that included leaders from medicine, nursing, social work and health administration. The committee visited programs that respect patient goals and preferences, provide comprehensive care, acknowledge and address the family or caregivers' concerns and needs and build systems and mechanisms of support that will ensure that the programs continue. The programs selected serve as innovative models for other communities.

Circle of Life/Page 5

For more information on the Circle of Life Award, visit www.aha.org/circleoflife.

About the AHA

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include almost 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks and other providers of care. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends.

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