



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Carly Moore, AHA, (202) 638-5487
Jennifer Schleman, AHA, (202) 638-5491

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

Eight Programs Recognized as Circle of Life Honorees

CHICAGO (July 23, 2013) — Three programs that expand the reach of palliative and end-of-life care will be recognized as the 2013 recipients of the Circle of Life Award[®]: Celebrating Innovation in Palliative and End-of-Life Care, along with five others that will be awarded Citations of Honor.

The programs share overriding themes of creating and championing the role of palliative care throughout all parts of the health care system. **The Denver Hospice and Optio Health Services** in Colorado have built strong partnerships with its community and other providers to embed palliative care throughout the health care delivery system in its community. **The Mount Sinai Medical Center** in New York City is a leader in palliative care research and has integrated palliative care throughout the medical center's inpatient and outpatient services. **UnityPoint Health Palliative Care Program** in Iowa and Illinois uses a system-wide approach to ensure palliative care is part of the full spectrum of patient care services, from inpatient to outpatient care and home visits, and has made palliative care a system-wide priority.

Each of these innovative programs will receive a Circle of Life Award at a ceremony on July 26 in San Diego.

“This year’s Circle of Life honorees exemplify the best in health care – providing compassionate care and helping patients and families facing complex health challenges,” said AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock. “These innovative programs address critical needs so that patients can manage their health and live as fully as possible. They also reflect the different needs of their organizations, systems and communities as they provide the best care possible for those they serve.”

Citations of Honor were awarded to:

- **Gundersen Health System** in La Crosse, Wis., in recognition of its work to bring advance care planning and palliative care to all parts of its community;
- **Hospice of Dayton** in Dayton, Ohio, for its commitment to quality improvement and emphasis on the patient-family experience and its work in complementary therapies;
- **Nathan Adelson Hospice** in Las Vegas, for its outreach to the growing Hispanic community and collaborative partnerships to ensure access to palliative and hospice care throughout its community.
- **North Shore University Hospital Palliative Care Program** in Manhasset, N.Y., for its commitment to training and education and collaboration across the health system.
- **Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs** in Washington, D.C., for building and expanding the infrastructure to provide palliative and end-of-life care services to veterans throughout the country and working with community-based providers to complement its services.

Highlights of the Circle of Life Award programs

Denver Hospice and Optio Health Services – Denver

The Denver Hospice and Optio Health Services take a strategic approach to the role of palliative and end-of-life care. Denver Hospice, working with Kaiser Permanente, created the first palliative care benefit in the country. As the safety net hospice provider in the Denver area, The Denver Hospice treats all who need care and provide services in hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes, and in patients’ homes. Optio Health Services provides palliative care for

seriously ill patients by using a team of nurse practitioners, social workers and registered nurses, as well as providing inpatient care.

The Denver Hospice and Optio Health Services have built strong partnerships with the community, including traditionally underserved groups, and other providers and managed care organizations such as the Veterans Administration to spread hospice and palliative care. Special programs also are available to care for individuals eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare, including complex care management.

The Mount Sinai Medical Center – New York

The Mount Sinai Medical Center's palliative care program is deeply involved with palliative care research and education in addition to providing high quality clinical care. Palliative care has widespread support throughout the hospital and its status within the institution is reflected in the fact that the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Adult Development was renamed the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine five years ago. Physicians, nurses and other front-line caregivers provide primary palliative care while interdisciplinary teams focus on specialty palliative care through its three consultation teams, inpatient unit and outpatient services. In addition, it has effective community outreach, with partnerships with other community-based palliative care providers.

The Mount Sinai Medical Center also supports caregivers who treat and care for seriously ill patients by starting clinical meetings with brief meditation or yoga sessions. Education of palliative care providers also is a central part of The Mount Sinai Medical Center's mission and several programs are offered to train healthcare providers and provide ongoing education.

UnityPoint Health Palliative Care Program – Iowa and Ill.

UnityPoint Health is one of the nation's largest integrated health systems with 29 hospitals, more than 280 clinics and home health services working together to coordinate care across rural and metropolitan communities in Iowa and Illinois. The health system is embedding palliative care within its broader population-based approach to health to ensure access to services for patients

with serious illnesses. UnityPoint provides a structure for spreading leading practices by piloting initiatives and implementing successful ones throughout its system. It has incorporated palliative care in its chronic care management program and services, providing outpatient and home visits to make sure that patients receive the right care in the right place.

Patients and families are actively involved in advance planning and determining the goals of care. With their symptoms being effectively managed, patients avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and readmission to the hospital.

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 14th year for the Circle of Life Award. The 2013 awards are supported, in part, by the California HealthCare Foundation, based in Oakland, and the Cambia Health 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 Alliance for Excellence in Hospice and Palliative Nursing, the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the National Association of Social Workers. 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

- provide effective, timely, safe, efficient, equitable patient and family-centered palliative and end-of-life care;
- use innovative approaches to critical needs and serve as sustainable, replicable models for the field;
- seek to address multi-faceted needs of persons living with serious illness; and,
- are actively working with other health care organizations, education and training programs, and the community.

The programs selected serve as innovative models for other communities.

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 nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks and other providers of care and 43,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information visit www.aha.org.

###