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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Lietz, AHA, (202) 626-2284
Carly Moore, AHA, (202) 638-5487

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

Four Programs Recognized as Circle of Life Honorees

WASHINGTON (July 17, 2014) — Three programs that expand the reach of palliative and end-of-life care will be recognized as the 2014 recipients of the Circle of Life Award: Celebrating Innovation in Palliative and End-of-Life Care, along with one awarded a Citation of Honor.

The programs share overriding themes of creating and championing the role of palliative care through the community. **Baylor Health Care System Supportive and Palliative Care Services** in Dallas has created a comprehensive and coordinated approach to providing palliative care throughout the health system. **Lehigh Valley Health Network** in Allentown, Pa. uses a system-wide approach to palliative care and offers inpatient consult services, outpatient clinics and home visits for patients with serious illness. **Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital** in Yakima, Wash., is a model of palliative and end-of-life care serving rural communities.

Each of these innovative programs will receive a Circle of Life Award at a ceremony on July 21 in San Diego.

“This year’s Circle of Life honorees have made end-of-life and palliative care a key part of their care mission,” said AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock. “These programs have found new ways to expand the reach of palliative and end-of-life care to patients, families and

communities. They are model programs that other hospitals and health care systems can adapt and we are pleased to recognize the great strides they are taking in providing dedicated, compassionate care.”

A Citation of Honor will be awarded to the University of Alabama Birmingham Center for Palliative and Supportive Care Ambulatory Program in Birmingham, Ala., for its focus on expanding access to palliative care where patients need it, including in outpatient settings, through telemedicine and at home.

Highlights of the Circle of Life Award programs

Baylor Health Care System Supportive and Palliative Care Services – Dallas

Baylor Health Care System, now part of Baylor Scott & White Health, has transformed its culture, embracing supportive and palliative care principles to serve all seriously ill patients, including those needing end-of-life care throughout the system. It has a sweeping continuum of care, with specialty care teams, primary palliative care delivery, outpatient clinics and a home-based advance illness management program. Two supportive and palliative care outpatient clinics provide new patients same-day appointments, as well as hospital follow-up to ensure continuity of care for discharged patients. The system also tapped into a pre-existing home visit program to provide comfort care and symptom management for approximately 1,200 homebound patients. The system also focuses on support for family members, particularly children of seriously ill adults, spiritual care and outreach to the African-American community, a traditionally underserved community.

Lehigh Valley Health Network – Allentown, Pa.

A highlight of Lehigh Valley Health Network’s palliative care program is the home-based visit. Patients with serious illness are identified early and nurse practitioners visit them at home, often for years. Palliative care closely collaborates across the full continuum of care, including inpatient consultations and outpatient clinics, as well as hospice, assisted living, a federally-qualified health center and a community time-banking program. When Lehigh Valley Health Network first started providing palliative care, patients and families, primary care and specialist physicians and community members were asked to help develop a plan for the entire health network. Community involvement has led to a wide support network of volunteer, clinical and social resources for patients.

Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital – Yakima, Wash.

Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital exemplifies how palliative and end-of-life care can benefit patients in rural communities. The 226-bed hospital tapped into the community’s commitment to improving the quality of life in the region and created a sophisticated, caring, patient- and

family-centered palliative and end-of-life care program. Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital believes in a holistic approach to palliative care, addressing the needs of both the patient and their families, and actively works to meet the needs of their community, including those of low-income and ethnically diverse individuals and communities. A large group of trained volunteers helps provide palliative care to between 70 to 80 patients in the program.

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 15th year for the Circle of Life Award. The 2014 awards are supported, in part, by the California HealthCare Foundation and the Cambia Health Foundation. Major sponsors are the American Hospital Association, the Catholic Health Association, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the National Hospice Foundation. The awards are cosponsored by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine; the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association, the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses and the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Foundation; 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, patient- and family-centered, timely, safe, efficient and equitable palliative and end-of-life care;
- are striving to implement the domains of the National Consensus Project Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care;
- utilize 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 throughout the disease trajectory;
- can demonstrate significant impact on people with life-limiting illness and those around them; 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. 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 the website at www.aha.org.

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