Living with Life Threatening Illness
Learning from patient-teachers

Course Description:
In September, 2017, first year medical students at Oregon Health & Science University will start a course designed to give them the opportunity to learn directly from patients and families what it is like to deal with serious illness. Students will get to know a particular patient and family in depth, by making a series of home visits or wherever convenient for the patient teacher throughout the course (September through December 2017). The visits will allow students to form meaningful relationships with people who are facing the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual issues of life-threatening illness, anticipated death, and bereavement.

Student visits will be geared toward eliciting patient-teachers’ thoughts and feelings about their illness, the process of receiving care, the impact of their illness on their family, their thoughts, hopes, and concerns about the future, and what they think future physicians and nurses ought to know about people with serious illnesses like theirs.

We need your help to identify patients who might like to participate as patient-teachers for our students. The patients we are looking for:

- **Must be seriously ill.** By this, we mean that you would not be surprised if they were admitted to the MICU or died in the next year.
- **Must be ‘self-aware’.** We want patient teachers to be cognizant of their situation and able to reflect upon their experiences with a student.
- **Must speak English.**
- **Cannot be demented.**
- **Must live within a 30 minute drive to OHSU**

*Please note that any referrals are needed by September 4, 2017*

If you have patients who fit these criteria and who you think might be interested, please tell them about the course and ask their permission for someone associated with the course to contact them to speak further about it. Please complete the attached Patient Referral Form for each patient and fax it to 503.494.1260 or email Molly Willis (willima@ohsu.edu) with their names, phone numbers and primary diagnoses. We will contact them about their interest, provide and discuss all the logistical details regarding the course and then assign them a medical student.
KEY FACTS FOR YOU TO TELL POTENTIAL PATENT-TEACHERS WHEN YOU APPROACH THEM
(WE WILL REPEAT THIS INFORMATION WHEN WE FORMALLY INVITE THE PATENT TO PARTICIPATE)

1. The students are expected to make 5 visits between October and December. Each visit should last no more than 1 ½ hours. Your student will work with the patient-teacher to schedule the visits at times that are convenient for the patient teacher. The first thing they will do is call the patient-teacher to set up the first visit. The student will come with questions, and they will come to wherever location the patient-teacher wants – to their home or NH is usual, but we’ve had visits in Starbucks, in the infusion unit, in clinic visits, etc.

2. Students will attend teaching and discussion sessions during the semester to discuss what they learn during the visits with patients. There will be assigned readings for each session that focus on different aspects of end-of-life.

3. The students are very early in their training. The student will be visiting on a strictly social basis and will not be able to give any medical advice.

4. Patients’ privacy will be respected. No identifying information about them will ever be included in the student’s writing about his/her experiences or in small group discussions.

5. Participation in this program is completely voluntary. Patient-teachers can stop a visit at any time. If they have any concerns about the students’ visits, or at any time decide they do not want to continue, they may call us and let us know. Their medical care will not in any way be affected by their decisions.

Program Contacts
Molly Willis  Program Coordinator  503.494.3062  willima@ohsu.edu
Susan Tolle, MD  Course Director  503.494.4436  tolles@ohsu.edu

Course Facilitators
Susan Tolle, MD, Course Director
Ladawna Gievers, MD
Susan Hedlund, LSCW, OSW-C.
Gregory Thomas, MD

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ANY MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE COURSE BEFORE CONTACTING POTENTIITAL PATIENT-TEACHERS, PLEASE CONTACT MOLLY WILLIS.