



Dear Friends,

I am filled with gratitude to each of the 229 individuals and Foundations listed on the Donor Honor Roll for your gifts in support of the Center's programs in 2017.



We warmly welcome 2 new Founders to the Center's family and a growing number of new donors to the Center's circle. This year for the first time our Donor Honor Roll expanded to 3 pages.

With your support we are co-hosting conferences across Oregon, developing new curriculum in Compassionate Communication and improving the quality of the POLST Program.

Our growing national impact is made possible through your generosity.

With heartfelt thanks for your support,

Susan W. Tolle, MD
Cornelia Hayes Stevens Chair
Director, Center for Ethics in Health
Care
tolles@ohsu.edu

The Program in Compassionate Communication: Advancing the Vision

On January 26th, 136 OHSU senior medical students were tested on their communication skills related to some of the most difficult ethical issues they will face in practice—giving bad news or disclosing a medical error. Medical students have a good grasp of the ethical principles involved in these issues. For example, the importance of honesty when a medical error is made. But historically there has been a gap between theory and clinical practice, leaving patients and families angry and questioning physicians who demonstrate too little compassion and offer explanations that are hard to understand. All medical schools teach communication skills. This year, however, OHSU is leading the way in raising the bar on expectations. Before graduating, OHSU medical students must demonstrate mastery in communicating honestly, compassionately and without medical jargon. Testing is done in the Mark Richardson Interprofessional Simulation Center with standardized patients. Video feedback and personal tutoring are given to those who would benefit from further support. This curriculum innovation is welcomed by students who indicate that the scenarios are very realistic. Moreover, students have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to practice and refine their communication skills before “having to do this with real patients in just a few months.”

Conferences and Seminars expand collaboration and impact

The Center for Ethics convenes conferences at both statewide and regional levels, inviting participants to share knowledge, promote collaboration and struggle together with thorny ethical issues. For example, at a recent City Wide Palliative Care Conference, we examined decision-making about turning off pacemakers near the end of life—a far more complex issue than many family members might think. At a regional Kinsman Conference, local hospice program providers described concerns that sometimes after a patient dies, a family member with a history of substance use disorder wants to retain the deceased person's narcotics. Some states are considering statutes that would expand hospice authority to remove narcotics after death to avoid this problem.

The POLST Program focuses on Quality

There has been much growth in the POLST program, to the point where it is now the standard of care for health systems and programs across Oregon to assist patients nearing the end of their lives in completing a POLST form. A majority of Oregonians today engage in advanced care planning before they die. There is however a price to our success and that is the growing inappropriate use of POLST in those who are “too healthy” to have a POLST form and who would be better served by completing an advance directive instead. If you have concerns about how the POLST program is being implemented, please let us know. The Oregon POLST Program welcomes information about your concerns.

Founders

Center for Ethics in Health Care



*Welcoming new Center for Ethics Founders,
Phyllis Beemsterboer and Joseph Jedrychowski*

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*Suzanne Storms Berselli and Anna Storms Ingram
receive recognition for the
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*As the Class of 2018 nears graduation,
medical students were videotaped with standardized
patients to test their compassionate communication skills*

OCF-Oregon Community Foundation, FCGF-Fidelity Charitable
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OCJF-Oregon Jewish Community Fund