



February 2021

Dear Friends,
As the snow melts away, I feel Spring coming and have a strong sense of hope that our darkest times are behind us.



2020 tested our resilience, compassion, and creativity, as the Center pivoted to broaden our vision and scope to address the dilemmas, uncertainty, isolation and suffering of the pandemic. At the same time, we maintained our momentum and moved forward in expanding the Program in Compassionate Communication.

No area of the Center's work has been curtailed because we have adapted quickly, using virtual modalities to testify, meet and teach. I am filled with gratitude by the generosity of our community. 2020 brought so many pressing demands for charitable giving, yet many of you responded by increasing your charitable giving to the Center, while also providing support to other organizations in a time of great need. We thank every person listed on the Center's 2020 Donor Honor Roll, and warmly welcome our new Founders, **Robert & Sherry Millis.**

Thank you for your support and partnership. Together we are making a difference and we are just getting started!

With hope and gratitude,

Susan

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Dr. Stowers leads virtual testing of all graduating medical student communication skills

Despite all of the challenges of the pandemic, we successfully tested all 156 graduating medical students on their communication skills in compassionately giving bad news and honestly informing the patient of a medical error. **Dr. Katie Stowers, the Ronald W. Naito Director in Serious Illness Education**, skillfully revised the content and coached the actors and the faculty so that we could conduct all aspects of the testing virtually. This is the fourth OHSU medical school graduating class we have tested. It is deeply rewarding to see how much more skilled the current graduating students are than the first group we tested. Two areas of improvement stand out: the students are using less medical jargon, and they are more honestly disclosing a medical error. Each year we keep raising our standards and thus we continue to provide confidential individual video review and mentoring to 10% of the graduating class who benefit from this additional support.

The New York Times favorably featured the Oregon POLST program

Oregon founded the POLST Program nearly 30 years ago as a way to record patient wishes to have or to limit medical treatments as medical orders. Emergency medical personnel provide all possible treatments unless they have medical orders to the contrary. People with serious illness and advancing frailty have a right to refuse resuscitation and intensive care. Paula Span's article, **Filing Suit for 'Wrongful Life'**, in the January 22nd issue of *The New York Times*, describes a growing number of lawsuits for failure to find and honor orders to limit treatments. The article highlights the story of an unwanted resuscitation in a patient with a New York MOLST form. It also features the Oregon POLST Registry as an effective backup system for assuring that POLST forms can be found if they are not immediately available in a time of crisis. The Oregon POLST Registry was established in 2009 as a repository for Oregon POLST forms to ensure that medical orders can easily be found.

The 2021 Annual Kinsman Bioethics Conference "Truth, Power, Justice: Bioethics as a Voice for Health Equity"

Thursday, April 15 and Friday, April 16, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hosted by the OHSU Center for Ethics in Health Care and Samaritan Health Services, this virtual Kinsman Bioethics Conference brings together ethics leaders from across the state and region. The conference objectives are to learn about the role and human toll of systemic inequity, share communication strategies for inclusive and equitable patient-professional relationships, and explain the psycho-social impacts of health care disparities on patients and professionals. Continuing education credit is offered for physicians, nurses and social workers; \$25 registration. Information about registration and the schedule are available on the Center for Ethics website or by contacting the conference coordinator, Megan Spickerman at helmme@ohsu.edu

All event information can be found on the Center's website at: <https://www.ohsu.edu/center-for-ethics>



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We look forward to the day when we can all be together again.