

# New guidelines for incorporating spirituality in end-of-life care

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Guidelines derived from a recent Consensus Conference, including recommendations on the role of healthcare providers in the assurance of quality spiritual care to patients in a palliative care setting, are published in a comprehensive report in *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, a peer-reviewed publication from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

The article, "Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care: The Report of the Consensus Conference," represents the final Consensus Report of a conference sponsored by the Archstone Foundation of Long Beach, CA. According to Joseph F. Prevratil, JD, President and CEO, "The report's recommendations seek to ensure that spiritual care is a fundamental component of quality palliative care, which strives to prevent and relieve suffering for seriously ill patients and their families."

"For the first time we have a practical model for the implementation of inter-professional spiritual care which will result in improved healthcare outcomes for patients," says Christina Puchalski, MD, MS, FACP, Co-Principal Investigator and lead author of the Consensus Report, from The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health (GWish) at the George Washington University Medical Center.

The Consensus Report outlines seven key areas for improving spiritual care: Spiritual Care Models; Spiritual Assessment; Spiritual Treatment/Care Plans; Interprofessional Team; Training/Certification; Personal and Professional Development; and Quality Improvement. Co-authors Christina Puchalski, MD, MS, FACP, and Betty Ferrell, PhD, MA, FAAN, FPCN, Principal Investigator from the City of Hope and colleagues from City of Hope National Medical Center present practical recommendations for implementing spiritual care in palliative care, hospice, long-term care, and other clinical settings. The guidelines provide spiritual care models, recommendations for

professional training, advice on how to develop accountability measures to ensure integration of spiritual care, and guidance on engaging community clergy and spiritual leaders in the care of patients and families.

"Of the physical, emotional, practical, and spiritual dimensions of hospice and palliative medicine, spirituality has been least well addressed. This report aims to improve that situation," says Charles F. von Gunten, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, and Provost, Institute for Palliative Medicine at San Diego Hospice.

Source: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

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