

HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY HONORS TWO TRAILBLAZERS FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN HEALTH CARE

NEW YORK, N.Y. (May 13, 2015)—HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN) on May 12 presented its prestigious Pioneer Medal for Outstanding Leadership in Health Care to Richard Payne, M.D., of Durham, N.C., an internationally-known expert in the areas of pain relief, palliative care, oncology and neurology; and Larry Vandecreek, D.Min., of Grand Rapids, Mich., a trailblazing researcher for the profession of health care chaplaincy.

HCCN, a leading national nonprofit organization focused on spiritual care, bestowed the award during its Annual Convocation Ceremony at Temple Emanu-El in New York, at which chaplains from around the world renewed their commitment to spiritual care.

In presenting the medals, Rev. Eric J. Hall, HCCN’s president and CEO, called both recipients “iconic figures” in health care and spiritual care.

“This year’s honorees have been true pioneers in spiritual care. Their rich accomplishments and profound commitment to science and, moreover, to people in need make each of them deeply deserving of this recognition,” Hall said.

Payne, a neuro-oncologist, is the Esther Colliflower Professor of Medicine and Divinity at Duke Divinity School at Duke University in Durham, and the John B. Francis Chair in Bioethics at the Center for Practical Bioethics, Kansas City, Mo. Among his numerous accomplishments during his career, he has more than 275 publications in his fields of expertise, has edited four books, and led the Pain and Palliative Care Service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York from 1998 to 2004.

“The Pioneer Award is so meaningful to me because of the quality and reputation of the Health Care Chaplaincy,” said Payne. “I am flattered beyond belief to be included on the list of previous awardees whom I consider mentors and heroes of the practice of humanistic health care.”

Vandecreek is the author of numerous books and journal articles, and a former editor of the Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy. He was director of pastoral research at HCCN from 1998 to 2001. Prior to joining HCCN, he was a clinical associate professor in the departments of family medicine and neurology at The Ohio State University Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio, and held numerous other positions in education and chaplaincy.

“The award is a capstone to my career. It validates my research efforts to describe more clearly how persons use their religion and spirituality to cope with illness and death,” said Vandecreek.

HCCN introduced the Pioneer Medal five years ago to recognize distinguished leaders in the field as part of the organization's 50th anniversary celebration.

At the Convocation Ceremony, HCCN led professional chaplains in a communal oath of recommitment to their service, which includes a pledge to “respect the religious and spiritual traditions of my patients, colleagues, as well as my own,” and “practice the art and science of spiritual care in an honorable and ethical manner.”

Research indicates that professional chaplains are effective at meeting spiritual needs, which are important to overall patient and family satisfaction.

About HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™

HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™ is a national health care nonprofit organization that offers spiritual-related information and resources, and professional chaplaincy services in hospitals, other health care settings, and online. Its mission is to advance the integration of spiritual care in health care through clinical practice, research and education in order to increase patient satisfaction and help people faced with illness and grief find comfort and meaning—whoever they are, whatever they believe, wherever they are. For more information, visit www.healthcarechaplaincy.org, call 212-644-1111, and connect with us on [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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