



INAUGURAL SPIRITUAL CARE DAY TO RECOGNIZE CHAPLAINS' VALUE TO PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, HEALTH CARE TEAMS

Annual Event Introduced by New Spiritual Care Association

NEW YORK, N.Y. (May 3, 2016)—The Spiritual Care Association (SCA) has declared May 10 as Inaugural Spiritual Care Day to recognize chaplains for their valuable support to patients and their families, and their overall contribution to the health care system. It will be observed annually on May 10.

To mark Spiritual Care Day, SCA has sent “Thank You Chaplain” cards with hand-painted artwork to about 10,000 chaplains and pastoral care departments in health care settings across the U.S. and abroad. The message thanks these health care professionals “for honorably and compassionately providing hope, comfort and meaning to all those entrusted in your care on their spiritual journey.”

“Chaplains are the face of spiritual care. They provide enormous value to the healing of patients and their families,” said Rev. Eric J. Hall, SCA’s president and CEO. “Yet they often go unrecognized. It’s time to celebrate chaplains’ tireless efforts and emphasize their contribution to the overall health care system.”

“In raising the visibility of the profession,” Hall added, “we hope that more people understand the role of chaplains and ask for their intervention when in need. People shouldn’t suffer alone.”

Professional health care chaplains provide comfort and meaning to people, regardless of religion or belief, during illness, end of life, grief, or other spiritual distress. A growing body of research confirms their positive impact, including improving quality of life, patient satisfaction, and medical outcomes. Spiritual care can also bring cost savings to health care settings, according to findings.

SCA, a new interdisciplinary professional organization that was announced last month, has introduced Spiritual Care Day as part of the organization’s goal to prioritize spiritual care in today’s health care environment. Its membership consists of chaplains, other health care professionals, clergy and organizations. SCA is an affiliate of HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN), a 55-year-old nonprofit leader in clinical care, education and research related to spiritual care in health care.

This day of recognition also aligns with SCA’s efforts to further professionalize the field, better integrate chaplains into interdisciplinary health care teams, and drive interest in becoming a professional health care chaplain. SCA presents a new credentialing and certification process that

is the first in the field to require chaplains to demonstrate clinical competence, like mandated in other health care disciplines. In addition, its learning center includes online courses for continuing education and provides more flexibility in fulfilling the academic study requirements of clinical pastoral education (CPE) for chaplain interns.

About the Spiritual Care Association

The Spiritual Care Association (SCA) is the first multidisciplinary, international professional membership association for spiritual care providers that establishes evidence-based quality indicators, scope of practice, and a knowledge base for spiritual care in health care. SCA is committed to serving its multidisciplinary membership and growing the chaplaincy profession. The nonprofit SCA is an affiliate of Health Care Chaplaincy Network™, a global health care nonprofit organization founded in 1961 that offers spiritual-related information and resources, and professional chaplaincy services in hospitals, other health care settings, and online. Visit www.spiritualcareassociation.org or call 212.644.1111.

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