



SPIRITUAL CARE ORGANIZATIONS RELEASE EVIDENCE-BASED WHITE PAPER FOR PROVIDING SPIRITUAL SUPPORT IN MEDICAL FIELD

NEW YORK, N.Y. (Nov. 2, 2017) – HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN) and its affiliate, the Spiritual Care Association (SCA) have released their newest white paper on the integration of spiritual care in the medical field for the role of a physician entitled “Spiritual Care and Physicians: Understanding Spirituality in Medical Practice.”

The white paper – an evidence-based literature review – is designed to help guide the field, empowering physicians to better integrate basic levels of spiritual care into their practice, raise their comfort levels in addressing spiritual issues and understand when to refer to professional chaplains to provide in-depth support.

“The evidence suggests that spiritual care needs to be part of the culture of every health care providing system or institution,” said Rev. Eric J. Hall, President and CEO of HCCN and SCA. “This paper offers a guide for physicians, not because of some religious agenda or sentimental persuasion, but because the evidence validates the importance of caring for the human spirit.”

The American Medical Association (AMA) advised that “inquiry into, as well as discussion and consideration of, individual patient spirituality” is an important component of health and that physicians should promote access to spiritual care. However, many physicians have little to no training in this area which can lead to not fully understanding its value and integration into health care. Among the questions explored in this groundbreaking paper are: What can a physician do to address the spiritual needs of a patient or family member? How is spirituality the same or different from religion? When should a physician refer a patient or family to a professional chaplain? Is it ever okay to pray with a patient or to share the physician’s own faith and religious resources?

With contributions by Deborah B. Marin, M.D., Vansh Sharma, M.D., Rev. David Fleenor, BCC, (each from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai) and Richard Powers, M.D. (University of Alabama at Birmingham), this document lays out the roles of physicians as spiritual care generalists and professional chaplains as spiritual care specialists. The paper notes that providing proactive spiritual care has been proven to have a positive impact on clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction and cost, which echoes the work of SCA’s Medical Advisory Council, to which Marin and Powers are active in. View online: www.healthcarechlaincy.org/physicians

This white paper is the third produced by HCCN and SCA in an ongoing effort to introduce the value of spiritual care in a health care setting. The inaugural document, “SPIRITUAL CARE: What It Means, Why It Matters in Health Care” was released in October 2016. This was followed by Spiritual Care and Nursing: A Nurse’s Contribution and Practice in March 2017. View all white papers online: www.healthcarechlaincy.org/white-papers .

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About HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™

HealthCare Chaplaincy Network™, based in New York, is a global healthcare nonprofit organization that offers spiritual care 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 or call 212-644-1111, and connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Spiritual Care Association

HCCN's affiliate, the Spiritual Care Association, is the first multidisciplinary, international professional membership association for providers of spiritual care in health care that establishes evidence-based quality indicators, scope of practice, knowledge base, and testing to become a Board Certified or Credentialed Chaplain. Membership is open to chaplains and other health care professionals, clergy and organizations. For more information, visit www.spiritualcareassociation.org or call 212-644-1111, and connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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