



The University of  
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# Promoting Excellence *in* END-OF-LIFE CARE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY OF NEW JERSEY,  
NEW JERSEY MEDICAL SCHOOL, AWARDED \$374,770 GRANT  
FOR INNOVATIONS IN PALLIATIVE CARE IN INTENSIVE CARE SETTING**

***Project Will Develop Model of Palliative Care in Trauma/Surgical Intensive  
Care Unit (ICU)***

MISSOULA, MT – The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School (UMDNJ) today received a 3-year grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the nearly \$375,000 grant was awarded through the Foundation's *Promoting Excellence in End-of-Life Care* program. The project will use the funds to develop an exportable model of palliative care in trauma/surgical intensive care, a new arena for palliative care services.

Although many Americans receive highly skilled, state-of-the-art care in ICUs, experts increasingly recognize that critically ill patients also can benefit from palliative services. The *Promoting Excellence* program supports demonstration projects that integrate high-quality palliative care services in ICU, improve care for critically ill patients and their families and assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

Ira Byock, M.D., a pre-eminent palliative care physician at The University of Montana, and Director of the *Promoting Excellence* national program, explains the need for the demonstration projects, "For too long, critical care and palliative care have been viewed as polar opposites. In reality, the science and skills of both disciplines are needed to provide optimal care for critically ill or injured patients and their families."

(more)

*Promoting Excellence in End-of-Life Care* is a national program supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, with direction and technical assistance provided by the Practical Ethics Center at The University of Montana.

UMDNJ is one of four grantees across the nation selected by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for funding from a highly competitive pool of 242 applicants who responded to the “Promoting Palliative Care Excellence in Intensive Care” call for proposals. (See attached list of grantees.)

The project’s model will be developed and implemented at University Hospital, a 446-bed academic medical center on the Newark campus of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Project activities will be centered in the hospital’s Surgical Intensive Care Unit and extend into the Emergency Department and step-down unit.

The UMDNJ patient populations include those experiencing trauma, liver transplants and general and other surgery, although the families of these patients will also be direct recipients of the palliative care interventions.

The project’s Principal Investigators, Dr. Anne Mosenthal and Pat Murphy, PhD, APN, “are very excited about the unique possibilities of this grant.” They believe that the collaboration between University Hospital and the New Jersey Medical School is distinctive because “patients in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit are often young and critically ill without warning, and this causes an enormous amount of stress on patients, families and staff.” This is not a typical environment for palliative care, and familiar palliative care models do not fit the clinical realities of a Trauma/Surgical ICU.

Mosenthal and Murphy and their colleagues will build their project on shared decision-making, pain and symptom management and ongoing family bereavement support. A core team, already in place and well-accepted, will introduce palliative care tools and practices into existing clinical structures and train selected nurses and physicians’ assistants as 24-hour onsite resource palliative care “experts.”

“This *Promoting Excellence* initiative seeks to integrate attention to comfort and quality of life within state-of-the-art critical care,” says Byock. “In so doing, we hope to elevate best practice standards of critical care to a new plane. The enthusiastic response to the call for proposals is evidence of the strong commitment among leaders in critical care to advance the human values of comfort and emotional and spiritual caring within the high-tech environment and high-pressure pace of ICU practice.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, NJ, is the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse – tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

*This press release is available at <http://www.promotingexcellence.org>.*

## GRANT RECIPIENTS

*PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN END-OF-LIFE CARE*

Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network, Allentown, Pa. Contact: Daniel Ray, M.D., Phone: 610.402.8499	\$375,000
Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston Contact: J. Andrew Billings, M.D., Phone: 617.724.9197	\$375,000
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School, Newark, N.J. Contact: Pat Murphy, Ph.D., A.P.N., F.A.A.N., Phone: 973.972.7251	\$374,770
University of Washington Schools of Medicine and Nursing, Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, Wash. Contact: J. Randall Curtis, M.D., M.P.H., Phone: 206.731.3356	\$371,150