



the schwartz center

FOR COMPASSIONATE HEALTHCARE

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British Government to Spread US Program That Supports Caregivers

Schwartz Center Rounds® to promote compassionate care in National Health Service institutions

Boston, MA (May 29, 2013) – Schwartz Center Rounds®, a program that helps healthcare providers process the difficult emotional and social issues they face in caring for patients and their families, has become a central part of England’s strategy to create a more compassionate healthcare system. Over the next two years, the program will be implemented in dozens of hospitals in the UK, and eventually offered to hundreds more.

Schwartz Center Rounds is a program of the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a Boston-based nonprofit founded by cancer patient Ken Schwartz in 1995 to strengthen patient-caregiver relationships and preserve the human connection in healthcare. More than 300 hospitals and other healthcare institutions in the US have adopted the program since it was first piloted at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1997.

In announcing the expansion of the program in the UK, Health Minister Dr. Dan Poulter said, “Shocking failures of care [in our National Health Service] demonstrate the need for more compassionate care right across hospitals and care homes. Schwartz Center Rounds have been shown to help hospital and care staff support each other and learn about how to deal better with tough situations, and spend more time focused on caring for patients in a compassionate way.”

"We are so pleased that the NHS has made Schwartz Center Rounds a central part of its strategy to improve the patient and caregiver experience," said Marjorie Stanzler, senior director of programs for the Schwartz Center. "This is an exciting validation of our work. Our Rounds program has been changing the culture in hundreds of hospitals and other healthcare facilities throughout the United States, and we are confident that it will usher in similar changes in the UK."

Jocelyn Cornwell, director of the Point of Care Foundation, the UK organization responsible for spreading the program, said, “Doctors, nurses, health professionals and support workers all work extremely hard to deliver the best possible care to patients. But patients do not always have a good experience of healthcare – sometimes they don’t understand what is happening, their preferences aren’t taken into account or they aren’t

spoken to sensitively. Often, this is because staff feel challenged or stressed by the high pressure environment in which they work.”

In the US, Schwartz Center Rounds are held at academic medical centers, community hospitals, cancer centers, outpatient practices, nursing homes, hospice and home care agencies and health plans. They provide a regularly scheduled time for doctors, nurses and other caregivers to connect, grieve, vent, explore and talk about all the things they don't have time to process during their busy workdays.

In 2009, Point of Care, under contract with the Schwartz Center, piloted Schwartz Center Rounds at two of its hospitals. Today, 19 NHS sites support Rounds and healthcare leaders hope to eventually offer the program to all of the country's 166 acute care trusts, the administrative arms of acute care hospitals. Trusts may administer more than one hospital. Rounds will also be adopted in community settings, such as physician practices and visiting nurse organizations.

The British government's decision to promote Schwartz Center Rounds system-wide comes in the wake of revelations that many patients had received deplorable care in some National Health Service hospitals. NHS leadership is now instituting sweeping reforms that focus on creating a more standards-driven, humane healthcare system.

Over the past five years, Schwartz Center Rounds have grown exponentially across the United States, filling a profound need for connection among doctors, nurses and other caregivers, an increasing number of whom suffer from burnout. The program has been shown to enhance compassionate care to patients and families, improve communication and teamwork among healthcare staff and reduce caregiver stress and isolation.

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About the Schwartz Center

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare (www.theschwartzcenter.org) is a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and their professional caregivers and preserving and advancing the human connection in healthcare. The Center reflects the vision of Ken Schwartz, who died of lung cancer at age 40 and found that what mattered most to him as a patient was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers, which he said “made the unbearable bearable.” He founded the Schwartz Center in 1995 to ensure that all patients receive such care. The Center is housed at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, where Ken Schwartz received his care. In addition to its Schwartz Center Rounds program, the Center also develops and funds other innovative programs, recognizes outstanding caregivers and works to create a more compassionate healthcare system.