



NEWS RELEASE

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The Joint Commission Awards First Advanced Certifications for Palliative Care
Hospitals in Connecticut, Minnesota, Michigan, New York demonstrate a focus on patient centered care

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – February 27, 2012) Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn.; Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, N.Y.; Mt. Sinai Medical Center, New York City; St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, Pontiac, Mich.; and The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. in Branford, Conn. have become the first hospitals across the country to receive Advanced Certification for Palliative Care from The Joint Commission.

Palliative care is the field of medicine designed to improve the quality of life for patients and their families by relieving the pain, symptoms and stress of a serious illness. It provides a treatment model for patients of all ages at all stages of serious or advanced illness that is not dependent on prognosis. The Joint Commission certification program was developed under the guidance of a national task force of experts on palliative care.

“Seriously ill patients will benefit from the decision by these five leading hospitals to follow national standards and evidence-based guidelines that emphasize the need for expert caregivers to work together as teams with patients and their families,” says Michele Sacco, executive director, Advanced Certification for Palliative Care, The Joint Commission. “Certification signifies that these hospitals are committed to patient and family-centered care to optimize the quality of life for patients with serious illnesses. It is the best signal to the community that the quality of care these organizations provide is effectively managed to meet the unique and specialized needs of patients.”

The Joint Commission Advanced Palliative Care Certification standards emphasize:

- A formal, organized palliative care program led by an interdisciplinary team whose members possess the requisite expertise in palliative care;
- Leadership endorsement and support of the program’s goals for providing care, treatment and services;

- A special focus on patient and family engagement;
- Processes which support the coordination of care and communication among all care settings and providers; and
- The use of evidence-based national guidelines or expert consensus to guide patient care.

For more information about the Advanced Certification for Palliative Care program, please call (630) 792-5291, or email dscinfo@jointcommission.org.

Statements from the first five certified palliative care organizations and the Center to Advance Palliative Care:

Every team can benefit from the certification process. We've already seen the analysis and collaborative team effort involved in preparing for certification lead to improvement in care, multidisciplinary team function, documentation and communication. And, the commitment of hospital leadership have enabled teams to gain a much higher profile within their institution. Certification is a must for every quality program.

Diane Meier, M.D., director, Center to Advance Palliative Care

We are thrilled to have been awarded Advanced Certification for Palliative Care. The Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute at the Mount Sinai Medical Center strives to provide the added layer of support that improves the quality of life of for seriously ill patients and their families. The Certification process was an extremely positive experience for us that highlighted the importance of every member of our team and the standard of care that we provide every day.

R. Sean Morrison, M.D., director, The Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute, Mount Sinai Medical Center

We are thrilled to be one of the first five programs in the country to achieve Advanced Certification in Palliative Care from The Joint Commission. We felt that we had a high quality program, but the process of preparing for certification forced us to take an even more careful look at all of our clinical, educational and administrative processes, and find areas that could benefit from being more formalized and improved. In addition to developing and then monitoring our four required quality improvement measures, we now have a multidisciplinary quality team that is identifying new projects to improve the care that we deliver. The certification

process helped us more systematically meet the palliative care needs of the patients and families that we serve.

Timothy E. Quill, M.D., professor of Medicine, Psychiatry and Medical Humanities, Center for Ethics, Humanities and Palliative Care, University of Rochester School of Medicine

Our goal in obtaining this certification was to raise the bar for the level of service we provide to our patients with serious illnesses and their families. We're excited to be leaders in this important and growing area of patient care.

Jim Risser, M.D., physician, HealthPartners Medical Group, medical director, Regions Hospital palliative care team

St. Joseph Mercy Oakland is honored to be one of five U.S. health care organizations to receive The Joint Commission's Advanced Certification in Palliative Care. Our award-winning, nationally recognized comprehensive program continues to enhance the quality of life for patients who come to us for their care. This distinction aligns with our commitment to provide safe, quality care and acknowledges the exceptional performance and excellence demonstrated by our physicians, nurses and clinical associates."

Jack Weiner, president and CEO, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland

The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. is extraordinarily happy to receive the coveted Gold Seal of Approval[®] for Advanced Certification for Palliative Care from The Joint Commission. We are proud to be the first hospital to receive this distinction and to do so without a single Requirement for Improvement. The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. promises to continue to offer our patients and families the richest mixture of charity, kindness and science we can attain; and never to compromise our mission for any reason whatsoever.

Mrs. Marc Alphons Hurzeler, R.N., M.P.H., president and CEO, The Connecticut Hospice, Inc.

Joseph F. Andrews, Jr., M.D., Chairman, The Connecticut Palliative Physicians GroupSM

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Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission currently certifies more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, focused on the care of patients with chronic illnesses such as stroke, joint replacement, stroke rehabilitation, heart failure and many others. The Joint Commission also provides health care staffing services certification for more than 750 staffing offices. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.