

Health Headlines

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JJP Palliative Care Team Members: (l-r, Chaplain Daniel Degyansky; Carmel Aponte, MSW; Bindu Raju, MD; Paulina Kim, MD; Oren Brody, MD; Kate Rex-Kiss, MSW; Robyn Anderson, RN; Julia Dryczimski, PhD)

Palliative Care Means Comfort When It Counts Most

James J. Peters Palliative Care Team Shares National Spotlight with VISN3 Partners

BRONX, NY – Benjamin Franklin once said, “Nothing in this life is certain, except for death and taxes.” While some might argue the inevitability of taxes, the notion of an eventual death leaves little room for discussion. The fact is, like it or not, we all understand that it is the inevitable end of every human life.

With that unpleasant reality plainly stated, it may be of some comfort to know that there are many, caring professionals whose lives are devoted to making that inevitability, a process of reconciliation, fulfillment and peace. The medical term for this process is “palliative care,” and at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center it constitutes a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, team-oriented approach to addressing the patient’s end-

of-life needs. Teams typically include doctors, nurses, social workers, mental health practitioners and clergy, all working together to ensure that the patient's needs are met.

“Being diagnosed with a serious illness can be frightening,” explained JJP Palliative Care Team member, Robyn Anderson-Malico, RN, “Physical symptoms, such as pain, can be debilitating and navigating through numerous specialists, tests and treatments can seem overwhelming. Our team works closely with the veteran, his family and the various specialists to help interpret medical information and to help the patient identify specific goals for their care, based upon their individual needs, values and beliefs. In this way we endeavor to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the patient and their families.”

At the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, these caring professionals team with their VA counterparts throughout the region, to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing each individual's end of life needs. Together they comprise the VISN 3 Palliative Care Team, winners of the American Hospital Association's Circle of Life Award for 2010.

The Circle of life Award, established by the American Hospital Association in 1999, celebrates programs, across the nation, that have made great strides in end-of-life care. Circle of Life nominations are received and reviewed by a selection committee that includes leaders from medicine, nursing, social work and health administration. Winners are reflective of programs that respect patient goals and preferences, provide comprehensive care and acknowledge and address the family's concerns. For more information on the Circle of Life Award, visit www.aha.org/cirleoflife

About the AHA

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health provider organizations committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include almost 5000 institutions and providers of care. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health issues and trends.

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