



Department of Veterans Affairs

Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial
VA Medical Center
Walla Walla, WA

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2011

2nd Annual Palliative Care Forum Offered At Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA

Walla Walla, WA – The 2nd Annual Palliative Care Forum will be held at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center. A pre-event Speakers Reception and networking opportunity on Monday evening, July 18th in the VA Theater from 4:30pm to 6:00pm. The all day forum will be held on Tuesday, July 19th from 8:00am to 4:00pm, also in the VA Theater. The community is cordially invited to participate in both of these events.

According to the Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC), palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. This type of care is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness - whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. Palliative care professionals work with a patient's other health care providers to provide an extra layer of support. Palliative care is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and can be provided together with curative treatment.

Walla Walla VA's Hospice and Palliative Care Coordinator, Catherine Zimmerman, LCSW, BCD, states, "We are happy to be offering the Palliative Care Forum for a second year. The annual Palliative Care Forum celebrates our palliative care partnerships in the community. Veterans represent one quarter of the dying, and only a small fraction of veterans receive VA supported health care. As a national health system we are working to improve veteran-specific palliative and end of life care. The palliative care needs of veterans are unique. We are helping health care providers learn about how to support comfort and quality of life for these important members of our community who have served our nation. Education is one of key needs for health care providers in the delivery of quality palliative care."

The keynote speaker for the Palliative Care Forum is Dr. Carol Luhrs. Dr. Luhrs is the Director of the Comprehensive End of Life Care (CELC) Implementation Center, Palliative Care Clinical Champion of the VA's Regional Health Network in VISN 3, and Chief of Hematology/Oncology at the Brooklyn campus of the VA-New York Harbor Healthcare System. Under her leadership, the VISN 3 Palliative Care Program received the 2010 Circle of Life Award

and the 2006 Selinske Founder's Award from the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State. Dr. Luhrs is an Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at State University of New York Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York.

The full day educational program will feature presentations by palliative care professionals and educators, as well as by members of the hospice and palliative care community. Continuing Education Credits will be offered for Nurses and Social Workers with pre-registration. There is no charge for the event, but a boxed lunch will be available for \$11.00. Brown bag lunches are also welcome. To pre-register, contact: Catherine Zimmerman, for the event by either email (Catherine.zimmerman2@va.gov), or by phone (509-525-5200 x26270). Please pre-register for the conference before July 12, 2011. Late registrations may be accepted on a space available basis.

The 2011 Palliative Care Forum is made possible by a generous grant from Veterans Health Administration, Central Office Hospice & Palliative Care Program, and through the sponsorship of Walla Walla Community Hospice, Walla Walla University School of Social Work, the Washington State Hospice & Palliative Care Organization, and Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Cancer Center.

Media contact:

*Linda Wondra, Public Affairs Officer
Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center
77 Wainwright Blvd.
Walla Walla, WA 99362
509.301.1303 (cell) ♦ 509.525.5200, Ext. 22811*

###