

Executive Summary

Executive Summary of 2003 Circle of Life Award Winner

University of California Davis Health System
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The precepts of palliative care are integrated throughout the University of California Davis Health System, an academic medical center located in Sacramento, California. Although its award-winning West Coast Center for Palliative Education and Research (WCCPER) was established in 1994, interest in improving end-of-life care for patients and caregivers has been a central focus of the faculty of the program for nearly two decades. To wit, this institution is one of the few academic medical centers to include a hospice, providing research and education experiences for the health providers in the UC Davis Health System as well as for the medical students and residents who receive their training here.

The West Coast Center for Palliative Education and Research strives to raise the standards of end-of-life care by enhancing the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of palliative care services, and access to such services, particularly for underserved populations, from those participating in aggressive cancer clinical trials to patients living in isolated rural areas or correctional settings. It sets forth to achieve this mission through innovative educational interventions and models of care based on quality of life that can be validated and disseminated. The center is one of the first in the country to promote independent, innovative research, training, and care modules in all aspects of palliative care.

Over the course of a three-year grant from Promoting Excellence in End-of-Life Care, WCCPER developed creative and insightful approaches aimed at building awareness of serving dying patients in underserved areas. The grant focused on three separate projects.

- A telepalliation program that provided multidisciplinary teams of rural health providers the skills necessary to provide palliative care in their practices, through education and side-by-side "live in" training.
- A hospice unit established in a State of California Women's Correctional facility that would serve all terminally ill women who were approaching death in the correctional system.
- The Simultaneous Care (SC) project, a nationally recognized project that provides palliative care support to patients engaged in cancer clinical trials. This study has become the main

focus of WCCPER's end-of-life model building, because of its concern that many patients suffer at the end of life from the shortcomings of current cancer care patterns. Lessons from the Promoting Excellence grant have been translated into a new and distinct multi-site educational intervention also called "Simultaneous Care" and funded by the National Cancer Institute. The original SC project developed out of the Promoting Excellence grant is the focus of Part 2 of the Featured Innovation in this issue of *Innovations in End-of-Life Care*.