$7 Million grant awarded to create nation’s first palliative care research consortium

University of Colorado School of Medicine and Duke University work together to improve quality of life for patients

AURORA, Colo. (Dec. 3, 2010) – The University of Colorado School of Medicine and Duke University have received a $7.1 million grant from the NIH/National Institute for Nursing Research to create the nation’s first palliative care research cooperative group. The consortium will promote and conduct studies leading to better ways of relieving suffering and improving quality of life for patients who have advanced, potentially life-limiting illnesses.

Jean Kutner, MD, professor of medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and co-leader of the cooperative group, says a more organized and robust infrastructure will help define best practices in palliative medicine and will support high quality, clinically relevant research that will lead to better patient care.

Dr. Kutner will partner with Amy Abernethy, MD, at Duke University. Both led the development of the group’s first clinical trial, opening in early 2011, a study designed to determine if discontinuing cholesterol-lowering medications when patients near the end of life alters their survival or quality of life or leads to any adverse consequences.

“We envision this as the first of many studies designed to answer clinically important questions. This research will improve our ability to provide the best evidence-based care to people with advanced illnesses,” says Dr. Kutner.

“Palliative care research has been hampered by a lack of resources and standard methodologies,” says Amy Abernethy, MD, associate professor of medicine at Duke and group co-leader. “This award will support the development of a network that will be able to handle complex, multi-site clinical trials and research projects that can yield robust, reproducible results.”

Funds to support the award come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and will be shared with the initial consortium members, including the University of Wisconsin, University of North Carolina, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Beth Israel Medical Center, Mayo Clinic, San Diego Hospice, Northwestern University, Four Seasons (Flat Rock, NC) and University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The project is supported by Award Number RC4NR012584 from the National Institute of Nursing Research. The statements in this release do not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institute of Nursing Research or the National Institutes of Health.

Faculty at the University of Colorado’s School of Medicine work to advance science and improve care. These faculty members include physicians, educators and scientists at University of Colorado Hospital, The Children’s Hospital, Denver Health, National Jewish Health, and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Degrees offered by the University of Colorado School of Medicine include doctor of medicine, doctor of physical therapy, and masters of physician assistant studies. The School is located on the
University of Colorado’s Anschutz Medical Campus, one of four campuses in the University of Colorado system. For additional news and information, please visit the [UC Denver newsroom](https://www.ucdenver.edu) online.

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