

Delta Care Rx Announces Patrick White, MD, Inaugural Recipient of Delta Distinguished Scholar Award

PITTSBURGH, Pa., April 18, 2017 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Delta Care Rx today announced the first-ever recipient of the Delta Distinguished Scholar award. Patrick White, MD, HMDC, FACP, FAAHPM, chief medical officer of BJC Hospice, St. Louis, <http://www.bjchospice.org/>, and assistant professor of medicine at [Washington University](http://www.washington.edu/), has received an initial \$25,000 research grant, with a \$500,000 lifetime potential, for study into the comparative and cost effectiveness of pharmaceuticals.



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“Even if we can’t cure, there are ways to relieve symptoms,” says White, whose choice of hospice medicine was influenced by his experience at age 7, when he visited patients with cystic fibrosis with his father, a pulmonologist.

“Improving a cough or alleviating shortness of breath meant the world to those patients and their families,” he says. “Now, through the research initiated by this grant, my team and I have a tremendous opportunity to reduce suffering and identify those most likely to benefit from particular drug therapies at end of life.”

Delta Care Rx, www.deltacarerx.com, is a leading pharmaceutical innovator in

the field of hospice medicine, offering its clients unparalleled transparency in the effectiveness and cost of medications. With an average of 1.5 million patients receiving hospice care annually in the U.S., the potential impact of White's research on symptom management and pain control has widespread implications.

White is distinguished by his "commitment to take hospice and palliative medicine to a higher level of extreme, patient-focused care," according to Delta Care Rx CEO Mary Mihalyo, PharmD, BCPS, CDE.

Mihalyo is a widely respected pioneer in the specialty of hospice pharmacy.

"In hospice and palliative medicine, there is a lack of evidence identifying the true pharmaco-economic nature of medications we use daily," says Mihalyo. "The hospice profession needs physicians who are also researchers."

To date, pharmaceutical research in hospice medicine is limited. Hospice patients are excluded from most clinical trials. This exclusion makes it difficult to determine which drug therapies are effective for hospice patients, and which are not. Too often, hospice clinicians must make choices based on affordability, not on efficacy.

"Some commonly prescribed medications actually reduce quality of life for hospice patients and offer no benefit toward survival," White says.

The award announcement follows closely that of last week's selection of White to serve on the Missouri Governor's interdisciplinary council on palliative care and quality of life. He currently serves as chair of the palliative care committee of the Missouri Hospice and Palliative Care Association, and sits the national Hospice Medical Director's Leadership Council of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

"Patrick White exemplifies the physician-researcher model and has a demonstrated interest in cost effective medication use," says Mihalyo.

In hospice settings, clinicians need the ability to distinguish between medications that are believed to work but may not, and those which actually work, but may be underutilized. The specific medications studied under the auspices of the grant remain undisclosed.

"A talented researcher like Patrick White may be able to prove that newer medications are equally cost effective to those used historically," she says. "That would be very valuable information."

Through professional practice, White has experienced firsthand the costs associated with a lack of evidence for pharmaceutical use. Also, he offers demonstrated ability to build collegial relationships across the continuum of care to conduct the research needed.

"Identifying evidence through research allows those of us within the profession to develop patient-specific ways to identify the most appropriate intervention – which is not always the least expensive medication on the

market,” says Mihalyo.

The Delta Distinguished Scholars Program selects leading physician-researchers with expertise in hospice medicine for career development funding to offset direct research costs. Preference is given to early career investigators, like White, who have the potential to significantly impact the field.

“I am especially grateful this award came from Delta Care Rx,” says White. “They are an integral part of the effort to advance the cause of quality patient-centered care.”

The Delta Care Rx Hospice Taper[®] transparent and pass-through drug purchasing model should be the “gold standard,” he says. The model assures that the amount a hospice pays for medication is always equal to the amount the dispensing pharmacist is reimbursed for filling an order.

In contrast, many hospice pharmacy benefit managers charge the hospice one amount then reimburse the dispensing pharmacist at a much lesser amount. The result is higher daily costs of care.

White hopes his team’s research “will result in improved patient outcomes with a lower cost of care per day.”

“When hospices are able to afford medications they couldn’t previously because of price, patients get the interventions they deserve,” says Drew Mihalyo, PharmD, Delta Care Rx founder, president, and COO. “As Dr. White considered the concept of enhanced access to medications, it set the framework for future research, which Delta Care embraced.”

The Delta Scholar Award is by invitation only and will not occur annually. Successful applicants demonstrate a strong research background in comparative effectiveness or cost effectiveness research, outstanding leadership skills, and a proven commitment to advancing the field of hospice research. Physician-researchers may request an invitation to apply at <http://www.deltacarerx.com/delta-campus/research>.



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About Delta Care:

Delta Care, <http://www.deltacarerx.com>, transforms and improves the hospice pharmacy industry through business transparency, innovation, extreme customer service, and the maintenance of vital community-pharmacy relationships. As a pharmacist owned, privately held provider, Delta Care sets the industry benchmark for pharmacy benefit management, on-demand pharmacist services, and hospice tailored electronic prescribing. Additionally, Delta Care offers tools and technologies to simplify essential workflow and ordering processes within hospice settings.

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