

Dear Health Care Executive,

Is your spiritual care department providing a significant contribution to your health institution's operations, particularly to improving patient experience and care? The value of any health care service is increasingly determined and reimbursed by the quality of that service rather than the volume of services that are produced.

Advances in research in spiritual care have led to an improvement in training and educating new, as well as established, chaplains. Healthcare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN) and its affiliate, Spiritual Care Association (SCA), are committed to assisting your organization ensure, through strategic consultation, education and competency testing, that your chaplains provide the highest quality of spiritual care and measurably contribute to your strategic goals.

All chaplains are not being trained, tested, certified, or continually educated in the same way. This is a reality which impacts the outcomes your organization desires in its care of patients, families, and staff. SCA has the only chaplaincy certification process that includes a test for core knowledge derived from evidence-based quality indicators and standard of practice for spiritual care as well as a simulated patient exam that evaluates competency in direct patient contact. Those who have completed the SCA certification process receive certification as an **Advanced Practice Board Certified Chaplain (APBCC)**, recognizing the additional knowledge and skill they have demonstrated. They have been trained and tested in department management, HIPAA regulations, cultural competency, the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of spiritual distress, advance care directives, staff support, patient clinical care, grief and bereavement among other essential topics.

Patient experience is an essential component to your organization's success. Over half of patients want their religious and spiritual beliefs taken into account when receiving health care. One study¹ found that many more inpatients desired conversations with their caregivers about religion/spirituality than had them, and those who had these conversations rated the hospital higher on several patient satisfaction measures even if they didn't ask to have the conversation. Another study² found significant correlations between chaplain visits and patient experience and HCAHPS scores.

We know that the changing demands you face in health care and incorporating the best practices within your setting can be not only challenging but intimidating for your staff. Requiring evidence of your chaplains' ability to provide the best interventions and outcomes to benefit your organization is necessary, as with any other health care discipline, to ensure that your organization's goals are being met. As part of your hiring and ongoing staff evaluation, review the curriculum from the organization they were trained by. Request from their certifying body a copy of the knowledge and competency tests that are required to measure readiness for certification as well as the offerings provided for continuing education for their members.

Only the SCA can show you our international outcomes and our scope of practice documents. The SCA will give you access to our curriculum, a sample of our knowledge test questions, the scoring criteria for a simulated patient exam, and a list of our ongoing and current continuing education events. We will share with you our series of White Papers that help chaplains and others understand what chaplains do and how spiritual care contributes.

With HCCN and SCA's clear focus on evidence-based outcomes and cost savings, your Chaplaincy Department will be positioned to contribute to the high quality care your institution aspires to deliver. All chaplains have not been trained, tested, or certified in the same way. There is a SCA difference, and we can help your present chaplains raise the bar and be the difference in your organization.

Do your other non-chaplain clinical team members understand their responsibility and role in identifying and supporting spiritual and religious issues important to patients? In addition to training, education, and certification that transform chaplaincy practice, HealthCare Chaplaincy Network provides the only evidence- and competency-based online education for spiritual care generalists³ of all clinical disciplines in the U.S.

We can help you create a culture of spiritual care in your organization that will enhance the experience of your patients and their families and empower your health care staff. Contact us at 212-644-1111 x110 today to learn more about the programs available from the HealthCare Chaplaincy Network and Spiritual Care Association.

Sincerely,



Rev. Eric J. Hall
President and Chief Executive Officer

¹ Williams, J. A., et al. 2011. Attention to inpatients' religious and spiritual concerns: predictors and association with patient satisfaction. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 26(11), 1265-1271.

² Marin DB, et al. 2015. The relationship between chaplain visits and patient satisfaction. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*. 21 (1):14-24.

³ Robinson M, Theil M, et al. On Being a Spiritual Care Generalist. *The American Journal of Bioethics*. 2015. 7:7.