Key Talking Points for ACPE and Spiritual Care

ACPE is the premier, DOE-recognized organization that provides the highest quality CPE programs for spiritual care professionals of any faith and in any setting. We do this through a rigorous accreditation and certification process for centers and educators that provide CPE. The depth of our training enables students to realize their full potential to strengthen the spiritual health of people in their care as well as themselves.

About ACPE:

- ACPE, founded in 1967, continues to be the only clinical pastoral education organization recognized by the US Department of Education as a specialized accrediting body.
- ACPE currently has over 450 sites across the United States, served by over 800 Certified Educators. ACPE also has one satellite program in Israel.
- In addition to completing a masters-level program in theology or a related field, ACPE Certified Educators spend at least three years studying and refining their practice before they can be recognized by their peers as a colleague.
- ACPE accreditation follows the same model as many academic partners, in that a comprehensive review takes place every ten years with a five-year paper review along with annual reports on the status of the program.
- ACPE accreditation fees are based on a sliding scale of the number of students a center enrolls with per student costs declining as enrollment increases.
- ACPE programs provide the kind of spiritual care and education that meet the standards of the Joint Commission, specifically PC.02.02.13 (“addresses providing care, to the extent possible, that accommodates spiritual needs during end-of-life care”) and RI.01.01.01 (“addresses patient’s right to access religious and other spiritual services”). Note: several other standards also apply, especially related to palliative care.

About Spiritual Health and Spiritual Care:

- Since 2002, “Spiritual” has been one of the four categories (also Physical, Emotional and Social) recognized by the World Health Organization as defining human health.
- In our increasingly pluralist society, American healthcare must attend to spiritual health and related issues if it is to be effective.
• Religious literacy amidst the general public has declined with each decade since 1900, thus the need for clinical pastoral education is greater than ever to assure competent, effective spiritual care of patients and staff.

• ACPE programs are particularly equipped to address the fast growing group of religious people in the United States who self-describe as “spiritual but not religious.” We train chaplains and spiritual care providers as spiritual “generalists” who can most effectively meet this group’s spiritual needs.

• In 2001, Iler, et. al. identified that with effective spiritual care, COPD patients reduced hospitalization by as much as one day.

• Current studies are exploring the role of chaplains and spiritual care providers in assisting families with making decisions with end of life care, often alongside or in lieu of palliative care professionals.

About ACPE Financial Models:

• The 2017 median salary for an ACPE Certified Educator is $87,500.

• Most residency stipends are $30,000-35,000 and receive at least partial support through Medicare Part B (“passthrough” funding).

• The median annual accreditation cost (which includes all student unit fees, accreditation site visit fees, and institutional membership fees) is $4195.

• A four-unit residency program can often provide a hospital with cost-effective 24/7/365 Spiritual Care Coverage for a clinical setting.

• While ACPE Certified Educators and their students work to connect with local clergy, the first allegiance for ACPE program participants is always to the patient and the institution (rather than a local faith community). As such, an ACPE program provides greater quality control as an educational process in the care of patients and staff. As one staff member stated, “The CPE Residents are ‘ours.’”

• For institutions that already host educational programs for other professions (medical residencies, nursing education programs, therapy education programs, etc.), ACPE is a complement to that mission and helps not only fill out an institutional commitment to education but also can provide spiritual support for students in those other programs through the ACPE students, i.e. their peers.