



TEACHING HOSPITALS *of* TEXAS

October 16, 2015

THOT Members

AUSTIN
Central Health
Seton Healthcare Family

CORPUS CHRISTI
CHRISTUS Spohn Health System
Nueces County Hospital District

DALLAS
Children's Medical Center
Parkland Health & Hospital
System
The University of Texas
Southwestern Medical Center

EL PASO
University Medical Center
of El Paso

FORT WORTH
JPS Health Network

GALVESTON
The University of Texas
Medical Branch

HOUSTON
Harris Health System
The University of Texas MD
Anderson Cancer Center

LUBBOCK
UMC Health System of Lubbock

MIDLAND
Midland Memorial Hospital

ODESSA
Medical Center Health System

SAN ANTONIO
University Health System

TYLER
UT Health Northeast

VICTORIA
Citizens Medical Center

Mr. Chris Traylor
Executive Commissioner
Texas Health & Human Services Commission
Brown-Heatly Building
4900 North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78751

Dear Commissioner Traylor:

On behalf of THOT, I am writing to strongly support four applicants for membership on the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Advisory Council created by House Bill 1874 of the 84th Legislature. We believe these individuals will strongly and effectively contribute to the important work of the Council:

- **Kristin Keefe, M.D.**, Director of Palliative Care, Seton Health Care Family; University of Austin Dell Medical School.
- **Jason Morrow, M.D., Ph.D.**, Medical Director of Palliative Care Inpatient Consultation, University Health System.
- **Roger "Mike" Ragain, M.D.**, Senior V.P. and Chief Medical Officer at UMC Health System; Professor of Family Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock.
- **JulieAnne Wisloff, R.N.**, Palliative Care Program Director for the University Health System in San Antonio.

Each of these applicants has a passionate commitment to providing sensitive, holistic and effective end of life care to their patients; and to developing programs and systems changes that make that care a choice available to all who may someday need it.

Each applicant has developed, managed and expanded significant palliative care programs. All have relevant palliative care certifications and memberships. Several applicants also have experience and expertise in bioethics, ethics committees and ethics consultations; important to ensure that end of life care incorporates critical ethical considerations.

*"I am passionate about the field of Palliative Care. I served at the bedside for many years and witnessed the lack of palliative and end of life care offered to patients. I came to realize the lack of knowledge surrounding palliative care was something I could help correct." -----
JulieAnne Wisloff.*

Dr. Morrow and JulieAnne Wisloff's work at UHS included partnering for the UHS' Advanced Certification for Palliative Care by the Joint Commission; only the third such certification in Texas. The Joint Commission gave this program a Gold ranking after finding no areas for improvement, and singled out UHS' own unique program design which includes a palliative care interdisciplinary note as a part of the Electronic Medical Record. The Joint Commission is recommending that component as an industry-wide best practice. JulieAnn leads UHS DSRIP palliative care programs and also teaches palliative care throughout UHS. Dr. Morrow has been nationally recognized by the Hastings Center with its Cuniff-Dixon Award, in recognition of his singular achievements in palliative education and care.¹

Dr. Kristin Keefe, with board certifications in palliative care as well as obstetrics/gynecology, brings her successful patient care, leadership and administrative expertise in palliative care program development and management to Texas as Seton's Director of Palliative Care. Consecutively serving as a Chief Medical Officer for Hospice and Palliative care and Palliative care consultant for over eight years in Massachusetts and responsible for doubling the size of her palliative care program, Dr. Keefe's experience as a gynecologic oncologist informs the work experiences she also brings from Brigham and Women's Hospital/Massachusetts General and UC Irvine.

Dr. Mike Ragain developed the Palliative Medicine Consult Service and Inpatient Unit at UMC Health System Lubbock. As UMC Senior VP, Chief Medical Officer, medical Professor at Texas Tech and a former hospice Medical Director, Dr. Ragain provides administrative, clinical, and educational leadership in this important, emerging field of palliative care; a sphere of medicine and healthcare in which patient-centeredness, quality of care, and treatment decisions intersect. Dr. Ragain has developed an award-winning Hospice and Palliative Care Medical School Curriculum.

We are appreciative of the Commission's leadership with this Council and look forward to supporting the Council in any way we can. We hope you'll find that appointing these applicants to the Council will significantly contribute to this important work.

Sincerely,



Maureen Milligan
President and CEO
Teaching Hospitals of Texas

cc: Jimmy Blanton

¹ <http://www.thehastingscenter.org/PhysicianAwards/#morrow>