



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire Center for Ethics in Health Care team, I extend our deepest gratitude to our generous donors. Your unwavering support fuels our mission, unleashes the creativity of our faculty, and sustains our flourishing programs. Your generosity empowers us to continue our vital work undeterred.

As the interim director, I've seen first-hand how support comes in many shapes and sizes. Whether you've contributed financially, volunteered your time and talents, advocated on our behalf, or spread the word about our missions, your impact is profound. Every contribution, no matter how big or small, helps us create the change we want to see in health care. In this newsletter, we are excited to share the giving story of one of our newest donors whose philanthropy has made a profound impact on the Program in Compassionate Communication.

We are incredibly proud of our accomplishments made possible by your generosity. Thank you for believing in our mission and partnering with us for change.

With Appreciation,

Katie H. Stowers, DO
Interim Director
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End-of-Life Care: POLST Conversations and Updated Guidelines

In February, **Oregon POLST Program's Medical Director, Christine Mallowney, MD**, and Center for Ethics Senior Scholar, Eriko Onishi, MD, partnered together to present at the 56th Annual Primary Care Review in Portland. Their plenary talk was titled "POLST Conversations: How to Explore Patient Wishes and Provide Medical Context for Treatment Choices at the End of Life." An updated *Guidelines on POLST Use for Persons with Significant Disabilities who are Now Near the End of Life* have also been posted on the Oregon POLST Program's website. These guidelines for Oregon clinicians and other health professionals help ensure that POLST is used appropriately for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Testing Medical Students Gives Insights into Communication Curriculum

In January, the Programs in Compassionate Communication led the 8th annual testing of medical students in clear and compassionate communication. Student testing gives an opportunity for **Dr. Katie Stowers, Ronald W. Naito Director in Serious Illness Education**, and **Dr. Cliff Coleman, Storms Chair in Compassionate Communication**, to observe how the curriculum impacts student outcomes. In the upcoming academic year, the medical school will enact a new set of communication-based competencies for students. The new curriculum will emphasize empathy and emotion recognition. Drs. Stowers and Coleman should see the impacts of this new curriculum in the next two years.

Registration Opens for 2025 Kinsman Bioethics Conference

The 2025 conference, "Healthcare Workers in Crisis: Identifying Moral Distress and Building Resilience," will center on mental wellness and wellbeing of healthcare professionals and others working in healthcare. Attendees will discuss common topics leading to moral distress, hospital boarding difficulties, post-pandemic crisis standards, strategies for navigating difficult situations, techniques for stress reduction, and other topics related to building resilience. Dr. Cynda Rushton, RN, PhD, MSN, BSN, an international leader in bioethics and nursing from Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics and the School of Nursing, will be this year's keynote speaker. This year's conference, co-chaired by Susan Hedlund, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C, FAOSW and Laurie Morrison, MD, will be held April 17th-18th in Bend.

For help in making a gift to the Center for Ethics, please contact Liz Arrington at the OHSU Foundation at arringt1@ohsu.edu or 503-552-0716.



2024 Donor Spotlight

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who supports the OHSU Center for Ethics in Health Care and shares our commitment to improving ethical and compassionate health care.

The story of Rick Gustafson's recent gift exemplifies this shared vision and inspires us all.

Rick Gustafson has seen first-hand the importance of compassionate communication during challenging and life-altering health care situations. Rick's wife, Susan, died in 2021 following a 10-year battle with lymphoma. He was also a close friend of Dr. Ron Naito, namesake of the Center's Ronald W. Naito Director in Serious Illness Education endowment.



Both Rick and Susan, and Dr. Naito, experienced challenges in how things were communicated to them during their illnesses. Rick's decision to donate to the Center for Ethics was largely inspired by Dr. Naito's dedication to spending his final years teaching compassionate communication skills to healthcare professionals and medical students. Not only was Rick impressed by the professionalism and quality of care his wife received at OHSU, but he is very impressed by Dr. Katie Stowers, her commitment to carrying out Dr.

Naito's legacy of compassion, and her belief that doctors should make space for emotions during difficult conversations with patients.

By supporting the Center for Ethics, he hopes to improve doctor-patient communication, especially during times of uncertainty in serious and terminal illnesses. "I have the highest impression of OHSU and that confidence led to my belief that making a contribution will be well utilized by the institution. You are doing very good work and it's very meaningful. I'm happy to be a part of it."

