

**Transforming Chaplaincy  
Description of Curriculum  
University of Rochester Medical Center**

**Course Description:** The primary focus of this course is to develop research literacy and application to pastoral practice in the clinical setting. The overall purpose of this course is to 1.) learn about the process of clinical health sciences research and the potential of evidence-based research to inform, guide, and 2.) improve the professional practice of chaplains in our academic medical center which provides tertiary and quaternary care regionally.

The course will offer group and individual instruction about the process of research, discovery, assessment and evaluation using a variety of tools, techniques and resources. The learning modules will provide participants with the skills to effectively search for evidence-based research, critically assess the quality of that research, and offer research-informed spiritual care interventions. Twelve learning modules (see syllabus) will be offered over units 2-4 of the CPE residency and will comprise 20 contact hours. Most modules are 1.5 contact hours. The desired outcome is the ability of our Chaplain Residents to apply the research findings to their delivery of spiritual care with patients, families and staff. This course thus aligns with the University's motto of *Meliora*, "always better" – a commitment to excellent chaplaincy professional practice in the clinical care setting and to lifelong learning in pursuit of professional competence.

**Course Aims and Objectives**

1. Discover how evidence-based research in the health sciences will inform, guide, and improve the clinical practice of chaplains in an academic health care center.
2. Develop basic competency in research literacy, including how to best formulate a research question prior to searching the literature, how to identify and critically appraise the quality of sources of scientific information, and ways to stay abreast of current literature.
3. Critically appraise the literature identified to better understand and integrate the strength of the scientific evidence supporting the topic in question.
4. Learn how to search the literature (PubMed, Web of Science, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and ATLA Religion).
5. Apply knowledge and skills learned to the delivery of spiritual care to patients, family, and/or staff.

**Student Learning Outcomes** - The Chaplain Resident will be able to:

1. Utilize and explain basic research designs and methods, including strengths and limitations.
2. Formulate pertinent clinical practice questions that are based upon principles of evidence.
3. Conduct efficient literature searches to identify best practices and to address relevant clinical questions.
4. Interpret and critique qualitative and quantitative research for clinical relevance and application.
5. Through critique and synthesis of the best evidence, choose among practice recommendations for those most applicable to one's clinical setting.

**Clinical and Educational Context** - The University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) is an integrated academic health center with a commitment to compassionate care and continuous improvement through research. The CPE residents are assigned to Strong Memorial Hospital, Golisano Children's Hospital and the Wilmot Cancer Institute. **Strong Memorial Hospital** is an 800-bed tertiary and quaternary care center with a Level I Trauma Center for adult and pediatric patients. Strong provides a comprehensive range of general and highly-specialized services. Its physicians are board certified in their respective medical specialties. Many are fellowship trained. Many of Strong's clinicians are active in clinical trials. This means that patients receive access to new treatments before they are widely available and physicians keep pace with the latest research and trials worldwide. **Golisano Children's Hospital** has 158 beds and is dedicated exclusively to the care of children, adolescents and their families. The hospital's new state-of-the-art facilities enable the very best diagnoses and treatment in many areas, including: pediatric surgery, cardiac care, oncology, organ transplants and neonatal intensive care.

The ACPE CPE program at URM 2 has a year-long residency, a 26-week extended unit and an 11-week summer unit. Each year five residents and up to 14 interns are accepted into the program. Our students vary in age (early 20's to late 60's), cultural background, religious/spiritual beliefs and life experience. Generally, the residents we accept have a previous unit of CPE with URM 2 or another program, a seminary degree or one in process, and either pastoral experience or active participation in a congregation/group.

**Course Director and Advisory Committee**- We will use the grant funding to offer a stipend to Course Director, Rev. James S. Evinger, M.Div., Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medical Humanities, Division of Medical Humanities and Bioethics (URMC). Jim is recently retired from full-time work and has the expertise and time to serve as our course director. Part of his role is to "train-the-trainers" among our CPE supervisory faculty, which includes two full-time supervisors and two supervisory candidates. We have formed an advisory committee for this course of faculty in our system who are fluent in the language and skills of research and are prepared to offer consultation to the Course Director and to the CPE Supervisors, as well as present lectures and individual support as part of the curriculum. The members are:

- Sally Norton, PhD, RN, FNAP, FPCN, FAAN, Associate Professor,  
School of Nursing, URM 2
- Karen Liljequist, BA, MLIS, AHIP, Liaison Program Manager, Research  
and Education Division, Edward G. Miner Library, URM 2
- Timothy Quill, MD, Professor of Medicine, Palliative Care, Psychiatry, and  
Medical Humanities, Palliative Care Division, URM 2
- Nelson Grimm, M.Div., Ed.D., Director of Field Education and Associate  
Professor of Applied Theology, Northeastern Seminary, member of  
Professional Consultation Committee for the CPE program.

**Integration Within the CPE Curriculum** - The following components will be integrated within the CPE curriculum for CPE Residents:

**Research-informed Verbatim** - CPE Residents will present one verbatim during the third unit in which they will consult relevant research to expand their understanding of

the patient's disease, treatment and implications for pastoral care. The reflection portion will include a brief summary of the findings from at least two research articles and how this research shapes their spiritual assessment and intervention.

**Case Study** - Residents currently write a case study in the fourth unit based on at least three visits with a patient, which includes a demonstration of how they assessed the spiritual needs of the patient and/or family and developed, offered and modified a spiritual plan of care based on that assessment. The Case Study format will expand to include a review of research related to the patient's condition and treatment and a reflection on how this information guided or did not guide the chaplain's pastoral care.

**Spiritual Care Rounds Presentations** - Spiritual Care Rounds are part of the Wednesday Noon Conference Series sponsored by the Center for Ethics, Humanities and Palliative Care and occur on months with a 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. During the spring of both year I and II, the Chaplain Residents will present either a research-informed case presentation or research that has directly shaped their pastoral practice. Year I: May 31, 2017. Year II: May 30, 2018. The summer CPE interns will be in attendance.

**Learner Outcome Assessments and Accountability** - Learning will be assessed by in-class computer-based exercises, participation in discussion, post-testing of knowledge of resources, concepts and tools, as well as a short online self-assessment. We will use both testing methods available through the Transforming Chaplaincy project: 1.) the multiple choice exam testing knowledge of concepts in qualitative and quantitative research; and 2.) an exam based on reading an article assigned by the project leaders and completing the accompanying test. In addition, we will revise the Level I and II CPE Evaluation (Student and Supervisor) for Units 2, 3 and 4 to include the following question for self-reflection: *How did your use of research literature shape your pastoral care during this unit? Give at least two examples of how your awareness of research findings shaped your pastoral assessment and interventions.*

**On-going Sustainability** – To make this enduring we will have the two ACPE supervisors and two Supervisory Candidates participate in the training with the CPE residents. These supervisors will learn to teach the program with the involvement of other hospital staff engaged in research. We will include introductory sessions for the interns – extended and summer. This will create a foundation for understanding research in spirituality and chaplaincy whether or not the student chooses to do more CPE or become a chaplain. The Transforming Chaplaincy advisory group is prepared to be a permanent work group that will consult with the CPE Supervisory faculty and provide course instruction and 1:1 support for the CPE residents and interns.

This application is endorsed and supported by the Chaplaincy Services department, the Professional Consultation Committee for the CPE program, and the aforementioned Transforming Chaplaincy Advisory Committee at the University of Rochester Medical Center.