

## **Dr. Leonie Herx – Winner of the 2024 Eduardo Bruera Award in Palliative Medicine**

The Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians (CSPCP) is pleased to award the 2024 Eduardo Bruera Palliative Medicine Award to Dr. Leonie Herx. This peer nominated award is named in honour of Dr. Eduardo Bruera and was created to recognize contributions in the field of Palliative Care. It is awarded jointly by the CSPCP and the Division of Palliative Care Medicine at the University of Alberta. This year, the award focused on education in palliative medicine.

Dr. Herx has shown herself to be invaluable at the heart of learning across undergraduate, postgraduate, and continuing professional development levels at the University of Calgary, Queen's University and beyond. She has been a Program Director for the conjoint palliative care residency program at the University of Calgary, a regular lecturer for Advanced Palliative Medicine Seminars for Palliative Medicine residents as well as regular seminars for rotating residents, and actively involved in undergraduate medical education including serving as a clinical and communication skills tutor, leading Breaking Bad News workshops and Serious Illness Conversations Guide teaching, involved with medical school applicant file review and interviews, and mentors 2-3 palliative medicine residents and medical students each year. At the continuing professional development (CPD) level, Dr. Herx has regularly led seminars and workshops on specific palliative care topics for physicians in practice, co-developed a regional CPD program in palliative care and provides tailored education for interprofessional team members including nursing teams, spiritual care trainees, and volunteers. She also co-developed and co-led an Advanced Practice Palliative Care Nursing stream at the CHPCA Learning Institute. Dr. Herx has been invited as a plenary speaker and workshop presenter at many national and international conferences on palliative care, covering such diverse topics as palliative sedation, staffing a specialist palliative care team, top practice changing articles in palliative care, moral distress and moral courage in palliative care practice, and palliative care and MAiD. Because Dr. Herx is highly respected for her expertise in palliative medicine, she has been asked to review and/or improve palliative medicine at several Canadian universities and regional programs.

Dr. Herx's dedication to palliative medicine education has been instrumental in the development of training standards within the field. As co-founder of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) Subspecialty in Palliative Medicine, she has been given Founder designation. This type of designation has only been given to a handful of individuals across the nation, who have been involved in the creation of a new subspecialty including establishing the accreditation, competency, training, and examination standards for the discipline. Dr. Herx is also a member of the Royal College Palliative Medicine Exam Committee and Chair of the Subspecialty Committee for Palliative Medicine. The Specialty Committee oversees the maintenance of national standards for the subspecialty in Palliative Medicine. Her roles, and the work she has done, reflect her commitment to the field for the betterment of not just the learner, but those who are touched by them.

Dr. Herx is passionate about building capacity for palliative care through education and equipping others to become educators as well. She has contributed to the development and spread of Pallium Canada's Learning Essential Approaches to Palliative Care (LEAP™) courses – courses geared towards building core competencies in generalist level palliative care for all health care professionals and organizations. She is both a LEAP Master Facilitator and a LEAP Coach,

supporting other healthcare professionals in becoming LEAP Facilitators so that more palliative care professionals can provide teaching using evidence-based, standardized LEAP courses. She is also a subject matter expert and contributes to the updating of LEAP course content and co-leads the Pallium Journal Watch Program as Co-Editor and Co-Host. The Journal Watch program is an ongoing series which regularly reviews the current palliative care literature and presents top practice changing articles in palliative care for discussion via regular webinars and podcasts. The success of Journal Watch is evidenced by the increase from 2 universities to 8 divisions of palliative medicine at academic institutions and thousands of downloads from inter-professionals from across the globe.

In terms of research, Dr. Herx's work has been cited by individuals nationally and internationally. She regularly participates in national multisite trials and leads regional quality improvement initiatives. Dr. Herx has been involved in numerous projects aimed at bringing care to those that need it the most. For instance, she developed a matching program for unattached patients (patients without a family doctor) with palliative care needs in Kingston. She also helped to establish the following: a palliative care program in five federal penitentiaries, an outreach program to Indigenous peoples in the St. James Bay and Moose Factory communities in Northern Ontario, and an outreach program for patients who are vulnerably housed or homeless in the Kingston area which received a Healthcare Excellence Canada national grant (1 of 10) to advance the program.

As an advocate for palliative care, Dr. Herx has contributed to the palliative care literature through numerous book chapters, peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed articles, editorials, and opinion pieces. She is the Co-Editor of the Oxford textbook - Palliative Medicine: A Case-Based Manual and is author of many chapters within it. Her work has led to invitations to give talks on palliative care and medical assistance in dying to parliaments, universities, and medical associations around the world, including in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Scotland, France and Jersey.

For nine years (four of them in the President track), Leonie was an active CSPCP board member who made significant contributions to palliative care in Canada. She co-led the development of several CSPCP documents outlining recommended standards for palliative care (e.g., Defining the Role of the Palliative Medicine Physician) and served as CSPCP consultant in the development of the Framework for Palliative Care in Canada, the physician competencies for the Canadian Interdisciplinary Palliative Care Competency Framework, and the Practice Profile and Core Professional Activities for the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Certificates of Added Competence (CACs) in Palliative Care program. She co-led the development of the first national set of postgraduate competencies in palliative care for all non-palliative care residency training programs, known as the CSPCP PACE competencies. The PACE competencies not only benefited Canadians, but elsewhere, such as Switzerland, in which palliative care educators will present their experience implementing PACE guidelines into their internal medicine curriculum for residents at the 2024 Advanced Learning in Palliative Medicine (ALPM) conference. Dr. Herx also co-developed the CSPCP Staffing Model for Palliative Care Programs (White Paper published in 2021), which has been applied around the world, and is Co-Chair of the CSPCP Human Resources and National Quality Standards for Palliative Care working groups.

On a personal level, Dr. Herx is described as someone who well-balances her personal life/family with work. She, her husband, and five kids love spending time outdoors hiking, biking, kayaking, and

skiing. Dr. Herx is a compassionate and courageous leader. She was the recipient of the Dr. Paul Adams Award in 2021 – an award that celebrates physicians who demonstrate “exceptional initiative, professionalism, and generosity”. Dr. Herx regularly offers her time to support colleagues informally and formally, including through the CSPCP-WellDoc Canada Peer support Program.

We are grateful to Dr. Herx for her contributions to palliative medicine education and the positive impact it has had on the community.