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You have helped...

Dr Len Kelly
Sioux Lookout, ON
recipient of the
D.M. Robb
Research Grant
to study aboriginal
palliative care

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Aboriginal palliative care: a qualitative study of bereaved Aboriginal family members
- ▶ Dr Charles Robert Kemp, Charter Member of the College, dies at age 95
- ▶ Announcement of new Research and Education Foundation Chair: Dr Jamie Boyd
- ▶ Research and Education Foundation Board for 2009/2010
- ▶ Plan to walk, plan to run, plan to pledge: Walk for the Docs of Tomorrow in Calgary, AB, on Saturday October 31, 2009

Aboriginal palliative care

Qualitative study of bereaved Aboriginal family members

The end of life of a loved one is an emotional and stressful time for families. High-quality care and the gentle kindness given by health care professionals can ease some of feelings experienced by families. Having a good understanding of the unique palliative care needs of those in a given culture can further assist grieving people. Dr Len Kelly, recipient of the D.M. Robb Research Grant, and his interdisciplinary and cross-cultural group of researchers conducted a study that focused on understanding the palliative care experiences of Aboriginal patients in hospital through recounting stories told by recently bereaved family members. The research showed that Aboriginal palliative care is a community and extended-family experience. The study, published in the April 2009 issue of *Canadian Family Physician*, revealed practical knowledge that can be applied to hospital-based palliative care of Aboriginal patients.

The first theme identified in the study was communication with First Nations patients. Communication was the most important theme and involved all members of the health care team, family members, and other community professionals. Bereaved Aboriginal family members expressed a wish that physicians communicate directly, respectfully, and without rushing, but cautioned them not to give false hope. One of the key elements of communication was the use of interpreters and translators. Most Aboriginal elders cannot express their needs in English. Using translators benefits patients by removing unnecessary stress.

The second theme that emerged from the study was caregiving. It involved nursing and spiritual care, attendance after death, and death at home. Participants almost always

commented positively on the nursing care received. Often, the nursing staff participated in family prayers and hymns, which spoke to the level of care they provided. Listening to and reacting to the needs of a family are essential for excellent care. For example, families expressed a need for flexibility in what happened to their loved one's remains after passing. The study revealed that many health care professionals understood this need and allowed family members personal time with the remains after death.

The study's third theme focused on the environment of the institution providing the care. Since end-of-life care among Aboriginal people involves the whole family and other community members, hospitals need to be able to accommodate large groups comfortably. Hospital policies sometimes pose barriers to traditional practices and cultural grieving processes. Restrictions on the number of visitors and time limitations challenge the valued Aboriginal tradition of being surrounded by the entire family through all stages at the end of life. Hospital policies often prohibit traditional practices, such as sweetgrass ceremonies. Creating an environment that encourages Aboriginal traditions and practices helps to foster a caring atmosphere that responds to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Dr Kelly offered his personal thanks to the Research and Education Foundation of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and its donors, saying, "This funding does in fact make small projects possible." The findings of this study will be valuable in the planning and program development of the new Meno Ya Win Health Centre that will open in 2010 in Sioux Lookout, Ont. Donations to the Research and Education Foundation support the College's Honours and Awards Program, which provides hundreds of awards, research grants, and scholarships that fund projects that lead to the enhancement of family medicine.



Dr Charles Robert Kemp

MD, CCFP, FCFP

Prominent Hamilton family physician Dr Charles Robert (Bob) Kemp passed away on Sunday June 14, 2009, in Stoney Creek, Ont. Bob was the beloved husband of Mildred Magdalene Schmidt for almost 69 years and the dearly loved father of Linda and her husband Bruce Hutchison.

Bob Kemp practised family medicine for more than 50 years with a strong commitment to palliative care. He worked tirelessly to ensure the best possible health care for his patients in Hamilton and Stoney Creek. He played a role in the realization of the Health Sciences Building in Stoney Creek, of St Joseph's Healthcare (Stoney Creek), and of the not-for-profit development of the Sara Calder Suites. He fostered the expansion of hospice services when he opened the Dr Bob Kemp Centre for Hospice Palliative Care in July 2007 in Hamilton.

Dr Kemp was a Charter Member of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and its Ontario Chapter where he served as President in 1967-68. In 1999, thanks to his vision and generosity, the College and its Research and Education Foundation established the C. Robert Kemp Palliative Care Scholarships to support the ongoing education of family doctors practising in the area of palliative care. Dr Kemp's foundation has funded and continues to fund this important scholarship program.

"His inspiration, dedication, and love of his profession, his patients, and his community are the things Bob Kemp's many friends and family will remember about him," said Dr Calvin Gutkin, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the College. Dr Kemp's daughter Linda said, "Dad was persistent about getting them [patients] the level of care they needed, no matter what. He always made you feel important, and that you had his full attention." The College family is saddened by the loss of a dear friend, colleague, and leader who was a pioneer in family medicine and in increasing the importance of palliative care as an integral part of every family doctor's practice.

Donations to the C. Robert Kemp Palliative Care Scholarship Fund can be directed to the College of Family Physicians of Canada's Research and Education Foundation.

Dr Jamie Boyd is the Research and Education Foundation's new Chair

On Tuesday November 25, 2008, Dr Jamie Boyd accepted the position of Chair of the Research and Education Foundation. Dr Boyd graduated from medical school at the University of Manitoba in 1972 and has been practising family medicine in Winnipeg for 30 years. He is site medical manager of the Family Medicine Program for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Head of the Department of Family Practice at Seven Oaks General Hospital. He also runs a family practice at the Kildonan Medical Centre and has hospital privileges at Seven Oaks General Hospital. Dr Boyd is married to Karin, and they have four children. Since graduating, Dr Boyd has been involved in many ways with the College of Family Physicians of Canada; he has been President of the Manitoba Chapter and President of the National College, and he chaired the College's 50th Anniversary Committee.



Plan to walk, plan to run, plan to pledge, plan to participate in the **5th Anniversary Walk for the Docs of Tomorrow** on Saturday October 31, 2009, in Calgary, AB. Visit www.cfpc.ca for more information.

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