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## Medicos team up at Whole Person Care National Symposium

Caring for patients and families who face a life threatening or terminal illness would be daunting for most of us, but for those health professionals who deal with chronic illness and life and death situations every day – it can be very stressful.

To assist clinicians working with patients who have a range of life-limiting conditions, St George Hospital's Director of Radiation Oncology, Professor John Kearsley and leading clinicians from Calvary Health Care Sydney, will convene a two-day National Symposium.

According to Professor Kearsley, the second Whole Person Care Symposium, which is a locally-developed initiative, is being held in response to the overwhelming success of the inaugural event which was held in October 2009.

"The Symposium will add a level of compassion and understanding to clinical services to help improve the wellbeing of patients and professionals," Professor Kearsley said.

"While we acknowledge the importance and the impact of technologic advances in Medicine, we also understand that the optimal management of a patient involves close attention to the non-physical aspects of patient care, including; listening to patients' stories, meaning-making, dignity, communication, aspects of healing and the relief of suffering.

"Every day we respond to patients with life threatening illnesses – this is a unique and challenging situation for health professionals," he said.

The focus of the Symposium will be caring for the whole person and will address how clinicians can become more competent at reducing the uncertainty that seriously ill patients face and being more comfortable in addressing it.

"Our patients want the benefit of our knowledge and expert diagnostic and procedural skills, yet the way we communicate and connect with our patients in their distress is equally important to them."

Speakers will include distinguished Canadian professor of psychiatry and palliative care researcher, Harvey Max Chochinov, from the University of Manitoba; the Director of the Department of Medicine at McGill Programs in Whole Person Care, Montreal, Professor Tom Hutchinson; and Professor of Medicine and Section Chief of Palliative Care at the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque, Dr Lisa Marr.

"The target audience will include health care workers involved in the care of patients with life-threatening illnesses including medical practitioners, nurses, psychologists and a range of allied healthcare professionals," Professor Kearsley said.

The Whole Person Care National Symposium will be held at Doltone House, Jones Bay Wharf, Sydney on 21 and 22 March, 2012. For last minute bookings visit:

[www.iceaustralia.com/wholeperson12](http://www.iceaustralia.com/wholeperson12)

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