

## **UAB Center for Palliative and Supportive Care (CPSC)**

The Palliative care program at UAB was originally founded by Dr. John Shuster (1999-2004) who was in the Department of Psychiatry in 1999 initially as a clinical care program for cancer patients with high psycho-social needs. Under his leadership, and that of Dr. Pamela Fordham in the UAB School of Nursing, the UAB Center for Palliative Care was designated as a Center of Expertise between the Schools of Medicine and Nursing in late 2000. Later under the leadership of Dr. Christine Ritchie (2004-2011), the Center name changed to the UAB Center for Palliative and Supportive Care in 2010 and the clinical ambulatory program became the Supportive Care and Survivorship Clinic. Additionally, the Center transferred primary Departmental affiliation to the Department of Medicine in 2004 within the School of Medicine.

Today the CPSC serves as the umbrella structure for all of palliative medicine and supportive care within the broader UAB Health system and affiliates. Primarily focused on education and research the Center also advises clinical care in multiple locations including UAB Medicine, the Birmingham VA Medical Center and Children's of Alabama. Clinical care delivery spans the continuum of care with inpatient hospital consultation, two inpatient palliative care units, ambulatory clinics at UAB and the Birmingham VA, as well as community based practice with home hospice management, telehealth, and in person home visits.

The Center is organizationally matrixed between the two Schools as mentioned and affiliated with many other Centers internally as well as external collaborating organizations as outlined in the organizational charts on the Center website. The Center is currently led by Dr. Rodney Tucker and is overseen by an Executive Committee comprised of six team members and a 13 member Steering Team. Internal stakeholder groups, a Community Advisory Board and an External Advisory council advise various aspects of the Center operations.

In addition to the emphasis on Research, Education, and Clinical care, the Center acts as an incubator for new and innovative projects and initiatives and has a robust infrastructure for development and marketing. The Center currently enjoys just over \$15M in permanent endowments as well as annual giving in memorial gifts and honorariums ranging from approximately \$60,000 - \$500,000 per year.

The Center is also designated as a University Wide Interdisciplinary Research Center (UWIRC) pilot as of 2019 led by Drs. Rodney Tucker and Marie Bakitas and is the home of the Southeast Institute for Innovation in Palliative and Supportive Care at UAB led by Dr. Ronit Elk. The multiple educational and research programs and initiatives of the Center are highlighted in the strategic plan and other sections.

### **Mission and Vision**

The CPSC has evolved into one of the top five most comprehensive palliative and supportive care programs in the nation and is governed by mission, vision and core values.

Our stated mission is to *“serve patients and families experiencing serious illness by providing compassionate clinical care, demonstrating leadership in teaching health professionals and trainees, conducting collaborative research, and influencing health care delivery and public policy”*.

Our vision is *“to become an international center of excellence in the field of Palliative Medicine through personalized care, innovative approaches and the sharing of expert knowledge.”*

Our core values are: 1) *Serving with integrity and compassion*, 2) *Innovating in learning and research*, 3)

*Leading through advocacy and influence, 4) Caring through collaboration and interdependence, and 5) Sustaining through community and collegiality.*

We are defined as **Personalized, Innovative, Expert** as our primary marketing tag line.

## **Organizational Structure**

Since 2012 the CPSC is led by an inter-professional Executive Committee and Steering team comprised of Director Dr. Rodney Tucker, MD, MMM and Associate Directors, Dr. Marie Bakitas, DNSc, Dr. Ronit Elk and Dr. Michael Barnett in addition to Administrative Directors Jennifer Hicks and Aras Acemgil. They are joined by a thirteen-member Steering Team representing the interdisciplinary nature of our field includes physicians, nurses, psychologists, administrators and Dr. Cynthia Brown, Director of the Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care (**GGPC**) Division. As noted in the accompanying relational, organizational and strategic planning charts, the Center is the primary umbrella structure for palliative and supportive care research and educational activities throughout UAB and its affiliates. The Center advises clinical activities within the three health systems, UAB, the Birmingham VA Medical Center and Children's of Alabama. The relational aspects of where the Center sits in the academic and clinical environments is highly matrixed and complex between Schools and the UAB Health System.

The Center rests within both the Schools of Nursing and Medicine with its faculty having appointments in either or both Schools. Administratively the location of the primary center offices and management rests within the Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care in the Department of Medicine.

The CPSC is an interdisciplinary center of expertise that is a joint venture of the Schools of Medicine and Nursing and was established by the University of Alabama Board of Trustees in 2000. Clinically the UAB program is one of the largest palliative care program in the nation providing quaternary level palliative care clinical, education, and research expertise. It comprises a broad range of services spanning UAB Health System, the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and Children's of Alabama. UAB has a 10-bed inpatient palliative care unit, hospital-wide consultation service, and robust ambulatory and community care service including the Supportive Care and Survivorship Clinic (where (in person or virtual) palliative care assessments will be provided-see below); the BVAMC with a 10-bed inpatient unit, hospital wide consultation service and home hospice program, and the COA with inpatient consultation services including an embedded provider in the Neonatal ICU. Due to its contributions to interdisciplinary research, the CPSC was recognized as a University-Wide-Interdisciplinary-Research-Centers (UWIRCs) by the university in the Fall of 2019.