

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

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Richard Stockton College Hosts Conference on Over-Treatment at the End-Of-Life and Medically Futile Treatment

For Immediate Release

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Galloway Twp., NJ – Why does end-of-life care cost significantly more in New Jersey than the national average, and why does this increased spending rarely lead to improved care and quality of life? And most importantly, *what changes are needed to address this problem?* These provocative questions and others will be the focus of a daylong conference of the Southern Jersey Ethics Alliance (SOJEA) entitled “A Troubling Abundance of Care: Over-Treatment at the End of Life” to be held at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey on Monday, May 12th.

One reason for excessive and inappropriate care is that many families do not discuss these issues until an emergency occurs. National Healthcare Decision Day on April 16th is designed to encourage Americans to have these discussions and to complete living wills and other important documents before medical emergencies occur or before a person becomes incapacitated and cannot make these decisions for themselves. See www.nationalhealthcaredecisionday.org for additional information.

The May 12th conference title refers to a recent two-part exposé in the *Newark Star Ledger* focusing on recent Dartmouth Medical School findings that end-of-life medical care costs are dramatically different depending on geographical location and other variables. *Star Ledger* Medical Reporter Carol Ann Campbell will join Dartmouth researcher David Goodman, MD, and other prominent educators, physicians, lawyers, and theologians to discuss these findings, and address various mechanisms of change.

Stockton President Herman Saatkamp (a biomedical ethicist) will welcome participants to the conference, followed by a keynote address by Dr. Arthur Caplan, Chair of the Department of Medical Ethics and Director of the University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics. Experts from Penn, Rutgers, UMDNJ, Stockton, Cooper Medical Systems, and others will facilitate dialogue and speak on topics such as medical and legal issues and concerns, the impact of cultural diversity, religious and spiritual beliefs, and the role of the media as a positive agent of change.

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Panelists include, among others: Myra Bluebond-Langner, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Rutgers-Camden; Merydawilda Colon, PhD, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Social Work, The Richard Stockton College of NJ; Donald E. Casey, Jr., MD, Chief Medical Officer of Atlantic Health (Morristown); William Isele, Esq., former NJ Ombudsman for the Institutionalized Elderly; and Dula Pacquiao, EdD, Director of Multicultural Education and Practice at UMDNJ.

The conference is designed for a wide variety of professionals and providers and will offer 7.0 contact hours of ethics continuing professional education credits. Currently, hours are approved for Social Work, Marital and Family Therapy, and Licensed Professional Counselors. Applications have been submitted for Nursing, Physician CME courses, and CHES (Certification for Health Education Specialists).

The conference is co-sponsored by Stockton's Division of Continuing Studies for Health Sciences & Human Services, the Stockton Center on Successful Aging, the University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics, and AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center. Complete conference description and registration information is available online by clicking on the Conferences link at: www.stockton.edu/hshs, or by calling (609) 652-4227.

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