

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 26, 2009

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**San Diego Psychiatrist Scott Irwin Honored With National Recognition**

*Palliative care psychiatrist from The Institute for Palliative Medicine plays unique role*

**(SAN DIEGO)** – San Diego psychiatrist Scott Irwin, MD, PhD, Director of the Palliative Care Psychiatry Program (PCPP) at The Institute for Palliative Medicine, has been elected as a Member of The American College of Psychiatrists (ACP). This recognition honors Dr. Irwin as one of only 750 practicing psychiatrists nationwide who have demonstrated outstanding competence in the field of psychiatry.

As Director of the PCPP, Dr. Irwin oversees the only psychiatry service at any hospice in the United States, working exclusively with patients and families receiving hospice and palliative care. PCPP combines clinical innovation, applied research, and education to improve mental health care for a seriously ill and highly vulnerable population at a critical time for patients and families.

“This is an extraordinary achievement for someone so early in his career,” said Dr. Charles von Gunten, MD, PhD, Provost of The Institute for Palliative Medicine. “Scott is unique in heading a program of palliative care psychiatry in a hospice. As a member of this organization, Scott will have the ability to advocate for better psychiatric care for all patients with advanced illness, and to the role that palliative care should play in all of health care.”

As part of his effort to seek more effective treatments for patients, Dr. Irwin successfully secured a \$154,000 career development grant from the National Palliative Care Research Center (NPCRC). The award supports Dr. Irwin’s study of methylphenidate (Ritalin) for the treatment of depression in hospice patients.

“This award was granted in an exceedingly competitive environment where there is little money to go around for new investigators in our field,” notes Dr. von Gunten. “In obtaining research funding, the first grant is always the most difficult to get because funding someone ‘unknown’ is always perceived as risky. Everyone at The Institute couldn’t be more pleased for Scott.”

“Psychiatric issues can impact physical health, the ability to respond to care and treatment, quality of life, and relationships with loved ones” said Dr. Irwin. “They can also interfere with a patient’s capacity to make decisions, understand their situation, interact with caregivers, or reach their final goals. The need for psychiatrists to work with patients that have life-limiting illnesses and their families has never been greater.”

“Through my admission to the ACP and the grant I received from the NPCRC, I hope to gain visibility for our program, educate my colleagues about palliative care psychiatry, and move the field forward with cutting edge research, so that more patients and families can benefit from the work we do at The Institute,” added Dr. Irwin.

## **About The Institute for Palliative Medicine**

The Institute for Palliative Medicine (IPM) at San Diego Hospice is internationally recognized for its excellence in palliative care education and research. Dedicated to the relief of suffering through the transformation of health care, it focuses on discovering, demonstrating and disseminating strategies for palliative care in existing health care systems whether here in San Diego or throughout the world. Physicians and healthcare professionals from around the globe come to The Institute for Palliative Medicine to study. Home to the country's largest palliative medicine physician fellowship program, The Institute also provides education to more than 1700 health care students and professionals each year. The Institute helped pioneer the palliative medicine subspecialty approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties in 2006.

For more information, visit online at [www.sd hospice.org](http://www.sd hospice.org)

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