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THE INSTITUTE FOR  
PALLIATIVE MEDICINE  
*at San Diego Hospice*

**San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine Program Wins  
National American Psychiatric Association Gold Achievement Award**  
*Palliative Care Psychiatry Program only one of its kind in the United States*

**(SAN DIEGO)** – The Palliative Care Psychiatry Program at San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine has been named the winner of the 2009 Gold Achievement Award by the American Psychiatric Association.

San Diego psychiatrist Scott Irwin, MD, PhD is Director of the Palliative Care Psychiatry Program at The Institute for Palliative Medicine and oversees the only full time psychiatry service at any hospice in the nation, working exclusively with San Diego Hospice. This program combines clinical innovation, applied research, and education to improve mental health and palliative care for the seriously ill population.

“This is an extraordinary achievement for our program,” said Charles von Gunten, MD, PhD, Provost of The Institute for Palliative Medicine. “Thanks to Dr. Irwin and his entire staff of dedicated professionals, this award will provide us with a national platform to advocate for better psychiatric care for all patients with advanced illness and for the role that palliative care should play in all of healthcare.”

The program addresses the under-recognition and under-treatment of psychiatric symptoms when the end of life is near. “The Palliative Care Psychiatry Program at San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine is setting a new standard of whole-person care for dying patients and their family members,” said Dr. Irwin. “Rapid screening, identification, and treatment of psychiatric symptoms – often within hours of initiating hospice care – can make a drastic difference in the lives of seriously ill patients and their loved ones.”

Dr. Irwin added, “Through this award, I hope to gain visibility for our program so that more patients and families can benefit from the work we do at The Institute.”

The formal award ceremony took place on October 8 at the Opening Session of the Institute on Psychiatric Services in New York, where Dr. Irwin was presented with a plaque and the \$10,000 Gold Achievement Award provided by Pfizer Inc.

**About The Institute for Palliative Medicine at San Diego Hospice**

The Institute for Palliative Medicine at San Diego Hospice ([www.sd hospice.org](http://www.sd hospice.org)) is internationally recognized for its excellence in palliative care education and research. Dedicated to the relief of suffering through the transformation of healthcare, it focuses on discovering, demonstrating, and disseminating palliative care strategies locally, nationally and globally. Physicians and healthcare professionals from around the world come to The Institute to study. Home to one of the largest palliative medicine physician fellowship programs in the country, The Institute also provides education to more than 1700 healthcare students and professionals each year and is home to PAL-MED CONNECT (1-877-PAL-MED4), a 24/7 palliative care hotline for physicians, nurse practitioners and clinical pharmacists. The Institute helped pioneer the palliative medicine subspecialty approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties in 2006.

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