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BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation Approves \$1,882,810 Grant to The Carolinas Center on Behalf of the SC Coalition for the Care of the Seriously Ill (CSI)
Columbia, SC - January 30, 2018 The Carolinas Center for Hospice and End of Life Care has received a \$1,882,810 Grant from BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, for CSI's South Carolina Advance Care Planning Initiative.

The grant will be used to improve the quality of and accessibility to advance care planning conversations through shared health care decision making for all South Carolinians, through awareness, education, collaboration and establishing a statewide repository/directory to allow access and retrieval of advance care planning documentation. Communities recruited for this project will be those who are characterized by predominantly low income, underserved, uninsured and/or rural populations.

The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation is committed to improving healthcare for all South Carolinians, particularly the economically disadvantaged. Executive Director Harvey Galloway said, "With this grant, your efforts towards this goal are encouraged and commended."

Six communities will be selected through a RFP (Request for Proposal) process, and will be asked to submit evidence of the demographics of the residents in their communities that meet the criteria for this project. Research findings suggest that predominantly African American, Hispanic and rural communities with diverse ethnic populations often have limited access to health care including, education on advance care planning. Anecdotal comments from health care professionals in Free Medical Clinics and/or Federal Qualified Health Care Centers state suggest that they do not routinely initiate ACP conversations with patients, despite the fact that they "see a need for it all the time."

Teeshla Curtis has been hired as Project Manager (PM). In this role, which Curtis begins on February 5, 2018, she will coordinate the ACP State Initiative efforts through collaboration with the ACP Leadership Council and the Implementation ACP Workgroup and sub-committees. She will ensure that the CSI ACP objectives are met through supervision of the community stakeholder sites and organizational accountability.

CSI partners are thrilled, according to Marisette Hasan, President & CEO for The Carolinas Center. Speaking from her Columbia office, Hasan said, "We are grateful to BlueCross BlueShield of SC Foundation for this exciting opportunity to make a positive difference for the residents of South Carolina."

Dr. John Ropp, CSI Chair and Advance Care Planning Initiative Medical Advisor, agrees that this generous grant is an important next-step in developing an advance care planning process that is utilized statewide. "Advance care planning is really at the heart of patient care because it honors a person's choices throughout their lifetime," Dr. Ropp explains. "This wonderful initiative will help establish quality advance care planning that is accessible for all patients and for those who help take care of them."