



## **Palliative Care Trailblazer Dr. Michael Harlos Wins COACH Clinician Leadership Award**

***Winnipeg Physician Receives National Honour***

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### **For Immediate Release**

**(TORONTO, ON)** – Winnipeg's Dr. Michael Harlos is a pioneer and a leader when it comes to using communications and information technology (ICT) in adult and pediatric palliative care through the Canadian Virtual Hospice (Virtual Hospice) and other innovative initiatives.

COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association has recognized the widely respected palliative care physician, researcher and educator's outstanding achievements with its new Clinician Leadership Award. "Dr. Harlos has broken amazing new ground by pioneering effective clinical communication using ICT in the challenging field of palliative care, which is often fraught with complex symptom management and emotional distress," says COACH President Lydia Lee. "This award pays tribute to Dr. Harlos' many related achievements in patient care and education as well as his role in championing ICT with his peers and colleagues across a variety of disciplines."

Dr. Harlos is Clinical Team Leader, Virtual Hospice; Medical Director, Palliative Care Program and Pediatric Palliative Care Service, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Professor and Section Head, Palliative Medicine, University of Manitoba.

Dr. Harlos was a key member of the team that conceived and designed Virtual Hospice, an internationally award-winning website that provides information and support about palliative and end of life care, loss and grief. He is the driving force behind the site's Ask a Professional (AAP) feature, which made Virtual Hospice the world's first web-based platform directly linking the public with healthcare specialists online. About 40% of AAP questions are from healthcare providers looking for input on difficult, complex cases. So, Dr. Harlos' responses are teaching tools, directly impacting quality patient care, supporting evidence-based quality end-of-life care that might otherwise be unavailable in certain care settings.

"Dr. Harlos is a highly committed physician. He, in collaboration with his staff and colleagues, works toward improving availability and access to quality palliative care. He is very deserving of this recognition and we in the Winnipeg Health Region couldn't be more proud to have him as part of our daily health care team," said Arlene Wilgosh, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority President and CEO.

A self-taught web developer who is renowned for combining his expert medical knowledge with compassionate care, Dr. Harlos' many other accomplishments include:

- Developing, maintaining and funding websites for the Canadian Network of Palliative Care for Children, Canadian Network of Pediatric Hospices, Manitoba Palliative Care Nurses Association and his own site, [Palliative.info](http://Palliative.info);
- Using telehealth to support palliative pediatric patients in Nunavut and rural and remote Manitoba.

"The Clinician Leadership award is a tremendous honour and I commend COACH for highlighting innovative uses of ICTs to improve quality care," said Dr. Harlos. "Our experience with Canadian Virtual Hospice demonstrates the power of ICTs to fill gaps in access to information and services in palliative care for patients, families and health care providers regardless of time and geography."

The Clinician Leadership Award was presented to Dr. Harlos at the Canadian Health Informatics Awards Gala in Toronto last night (Nov. 9).

[More About Dr. Harlos](#)

#### **About COACH**

COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association represents a diverse community of accomplished, influential professionals who work passionately to make a difference in advancing healthcare through information technology. Health informatics (HI) is the intersection of clinical, IM/IT and management practices. Members are dedicated to realizing their full potential as professionals and advancing HI through access to information, talent, credentials, recognition, programs and a broad range of services and specialized resources. [www.coachorg.com](http://www.coachorg.com)

#### **About Canadian Virtual Hospice**

The Canadian Virtual Hospice ([www.virtualhospice.ca](http://www.virtualhospice.ca) and [www.portailpalliatif.ca](http://www.portailpalliatif.ca)) is Canada's leading source for information and support on palliative and end-of-life care, loss and grief, for patients, families, health care providers, educators and researchers. Virtual Hospice is a not-for-profit organization staffed by experts in palliative and end-of-life care. Its operations are supported by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and CancerCare Manitoba.

#### **For More Information**

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