

Cigna Foundation and Cigna Help Improve Advanced Care for Communities, Customers

BLOOMFIELD, Conn., 24 August, 2016 - Cigna and the Cigna Foundation are taking steps to help individuals and communities improve advanced care for the critically ill, and to offer stronger support to family caregivers in Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Va.

The Cigna Foundation is providing a two-year \$320,000 World of Difference research grant to the [Coalition to Transform Advanced Care](#) (C-TAC), joining C-TAC in helping many who have inadequate access to medical and social services and who prefer an alternative to the traditional health care system. C-TAC works with the faith-based community, which is in a unique position to serve as a trusted resource to reach family caregivers and support their social, spiritual and health care needs.

“This grant from the Cigna Foundation will help us accelerate the critically important community work that C-TAC has been conducting from the very beginning,” said Jon Broyles, C-TAC executive director. “We’re grateful for Cigna’s partnership. Together we’ll ensure that the values and voices of family caregivers and those they tirelessly serve are heard and honored.”

The Cigna Foundation funding will enable C-TAC to conduct extensive research that will help it better understand the needs of caregivers. The research will provide a national baseline, and the findings will be compared with qualitative data from regional caregiver workshops and focus groups in Baltimore, Washington and Richmond. This information will be used to help create new models of care based on the values, needs and knowledge of caregivers and patients.

“Currently, there is an inadequate understanding of the knowledge – and gaps in knowledge – of families who are providing support for their terminally ill loved ones,” Broyles said. During the final year of an ill person’s life, family members provide care on average for 66 hours per week.¹ Yet, in many cases, caregivers have had no training to perform important tasks, such as wound treatment, and have had to learn on their own.²

“The Cigna Foundation has awarded several grants this year to organizations throughout the country that are embedding community health workers in communities – a best practice in improving outcomes and eliminating disparities. We now are extending our work to the ‘hidden’ community health worker – those family members who are caring for loved ones with advanced illness and chronic conditions,” said David Figliuzzi, executive director of the Cigna Foundation. “Cigna and C-TAC are committed to a shared vision where communities lead the design of practical, sustainable, community-driven solutions for their sickest and most vulnerable.”

In a separate but related move, Cigna started a pilot program focused on helping people with an advanced illness such as late-stage cancer or heart disease to receive holistic palliative care.

The pilot program will be conducted in New York, Tennessee and Texas for Cigna customers enrolled in individual plans, or in group plans offered to small businesses.

Cigna is collaborating with [Aspire Health](#), a leading health care company that will provide in-home medical services in consultation with the Cigna customer’s physician. Aspire will provide unlimited home visits, clinical assessments, 24/7 telephone access and caregiver support, and will recommend changes to medical or pharmacy treatment that will help the individuals manage the symptoms of their illness. These services are provided by palliative care physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers and clergy, as appropriate and needed.

“In the U.S., there’s an extreme reluctance to discuss palliative and end-of life care, but very often that’s what critically-ill patients want,” said Scott Josephs, M.D., national medical officer for Cigna. “Because many patients are afraid to ask, and many doctors are reluctant to propose, palliative care is not routinely or consistently offered to people with an advanced illness. As a result, individuals are often subjected to crisis interventions, including emergency room visits, hospitalizations and invasive treatments that don’t improve their quality of life or help ease the burden of their illness. I believe our health care system can do better.”

About the Cigna Foundation

The Cigna Foundation, founded in 1962, is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.

About Cigna

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¹ Rhee, Y, Degenholtz, HB, Lo Sasso, AT, and Emanuel, LL. “Estimating the quantity and economic value of family caregiving for community-dwelling older persons in the last year of life,” *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 2009; 57:1654-1659. The estimated economic value is in 2002 dollars.

² Reinhard, S., Levine, C., and Samis, S. Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care, AARP & UHF