June 30, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

We write to express our gratitude and to mark a transition point in the Transforming Chaplaincy Project. Today marks the final day of a four-year project that was supported [by grants from the John Templeton Foundation](https://www.templeton.org/). We are grateful to the Templeton Foundation for their financial support and to all of you whose participation enabled this project to succeed beyond our wildest imaginations. The support of the professional chaplaincy Strategic Partners ([APC](http://www.professionalchaplains.org/), [NACC](https://www.nacc.org/), [NAJC](http://jewishchaplain.net/) and [ACPE](http://www.acpe.edu)) was essential in securing the Templeton grants and advancing our project activities. Together we have also raised more than a million dollars for new, related projects.

[A detailed report of our activities over the last four years is on our website](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/2019/06/17/transforming-chaplaincy-final-report/). A few highlights:

* Seventeen Chaplain Research Fellows have completed Master of Public Health degrees; 16 were originally planned. Most of the Fellows are working as chaplain researchers, and three are in PhD programs.
* Collectively the Fellows are authors or co-authors of nearly 30 articles or book chapters. The Fellows have also made over 100 presentations, including three at international meetings and at a plenary session at ACPE’s 2019 annual conference.
* Curriculum development grants have led to research literacy education becoming a part of the chaplaincy education curricula in approximately one-third of the CPE residency programs (68 programs) in the U.S. With these grants, these programs have provided research literacy education to over 850 chaplains in training plus 100 staff colleagues.
* Research literacy education for practicing chaplains was the third focus of the initial project. Ninety-eight chaplains actively participated in one of the online courses taught by our Virginia Commonwealth University colleagues. Two new on-line courses have been developed -- Research Literacy (RL) 101 and 102 -- and will be offered on a regular basis through Rush University Medical Center. Thirty-seven chaplains participated in one of the two sessions of RL101 that were offered in the past few months and gave it positive reviews.
* We also developed a week-long Chaplain Research Summer Institute (CRSI) for practicing chaplains with 60 chaplains participating in 2017 and 2018. Over 20 chaplains are currently registered for the 2019 CRSI, which will be offered in July.
* In 2018 we published *Evidence-Based Healthcare Chaplaincy: A Research Reader* (Fitchett, White & Lyndes, eds). This collection of 21 chaplaincy research articles provides an excellent place to begin learning about the important research in our field.
* In collaboration with ACPE, a Strategic Thinking webinar series was developed to help chaplaincy leaders identify and engage with strategic issues for the profession. Three webinars were offered in 2018 and two have been offered in 2019; several of these webinars saw record-breaking levels of participation.
* We have developed a Certificate in Spiritual Care Management and Leadership designed to equip spiritual care managers with the skills and knowledge needed to lead robust programs of spiritual care in our changing healthcare and religious environment. The first cohort will begin this 9-month course in September 2019 in partnership with Rush University’s Department of Health Systems Management.

Taken together, all of these efforts are transforming chaplaincy in healthcare by substantially expanding the number of chaplains who can advance spiritual care through research and who are basing their work on the best empirical studies conducted to date. We are grateful and proud of their work and eager to continue to support them as we transition to the next phase of Transforming Chaplaincy.

That next phase, which begins today, will be based at Rush University Medical Center and will be led by George Fitchett. He and Andrew Andresco will continue to maintain the chaplaincy research and research education [website](http://www.transformchaplaincy.org) which has become the go-to space to learn about research literacy and research design, to network and to find research collaborators, and to build resources for the teaching of research and research literacy. They will also continue the [monthly email newsletter](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/news/newsletter-archive/). The next phase of Transforming Chaplaincy will continue to offer online research education classes ([Research Literacy 101 and 102](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/grants-training/research-literacy-online/)), Chaplain Research Summer Institute ([CRSI](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/grants-training/summer-research-institute/)), the [Strategic Thinking Webinar series](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/grants-training/webinars/), the new [Certificate in Spiritual Care Management and Leadership](https://www.transformchaplaincy.org/grants-training/cscml/), and, in conjunction with APC, the research Webinar Journal Club (WJC).

Transforming Chaplaincy is also launching six new research networks and an incubator to advance spiritual care research. Initially the incubator will focus on developing six networks of chaplain-researchers, chaplains, and healthcare colleagues and researchers (e.g., palliative care, pediatrics, chronic conditions). The aim of the networks is to bring people together who can plan and execute research to advance spiritual care in their clinical context:

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| --- | --- |
| Network | Conveners |
| Palliative care | Paul Galchutt |
| Veterans care, moral injury, trauma | Tim Usset |
| Pediatrics | Cate Desjardins |
| Chronic conditions | Geila Rajaee |
| Outpatient/oncology | Petra Sprik & Beth Muehlhausen |
| Chaplain functions | Jeanne Wirpsa |

Please watch the Transforming Chaplaincy newsletter and website for more information as the networks are launched. The link to sign up for the new research networks will be live on the Transforming Chaplaincy website at the end of June.

Throughout the initial phase of Transforming Chaplaincy, Wendy has been co-director of the project. With Transforming Chaplaincy moving into a new phase, Wendy will transition from being a co-director of Transforming Chaplaincy to being a Senior Adviser. This will enable her to devote more of her time to the [Chaplaincy Innovation Lab (CIL), based at Brandeis University](http://www.chaplaincyinnovation.org) and run by Wendy along with co-founder Trace Haythorn of ACPE. Founded in October of 2018 out of the success of the Transforming Chaplaincy Project, the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab brings chaplaincy leaders, theological educators, clinical educators, and social scientists into a research-based conversation about the state of chaplaincy and spiritual care in diverse contexts, including and beyond healthcare. It aims to improve how chaplains are trained, how they work with diverse individuals (including those with no religious or spiritual backgrounds), and how chaplaincy and spiritual care coheres as a professional field. The Lab produced a **[case statement](http://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Chaplaincy-Innovation-Lab-case-statement.pdf" \t "_blank)** on spiritual care in today’s world to help start a conversation on how to address spiritual needs most effectively. In addition to Wendy’s service as Co-Director of Transforming Chaplaincy, there is more continuity between the Lab and Transforming Chaplaincy, with TC Communications Director Michael Skaggs now serving as Executive Director of the Lab. George Fitchett is also a key member of the Advisory Committee. If you are not already on the Lab’s mailing list, consider [joining here](http://chaplaincyinnovation.org/contact), [attending a webinar](http://chaplaincyinnovation.org/events), learning about spiritual care in [areas outside of healthcare](http://chaplaincyinnovation.org/news), and thinking [about related educational initiatives in theological school contexts](http://chaplaincyinnovation.org/projects/educating-effective-chaplains).

We are deeply grateful for the past four years and for all we have learned from and with you along the way. We look forward to continuing to support one another and all of you as you teach, learn and do the work of spiritual care every day.

With thanks,

Wendy and George