

# South Florida Hospital News<sup>®</sup> and HEALTHCARE REPORT

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## Marymount University and OpusCare Launch First South Florida Palliative Care Continuing Education Conference

BY GABRIELA ROQUE-VELASCO

Palliative care provides coordinated care, helping to bridge the gap in the healthcare delivery system. Recently, palliative care has become a national topic of conversation among healthcare leaders seeking ways to improve the lives of the chronically ill. Dr. Roque-Velasco, President and CEO of OpusCare of Florida and Texas, was one of the first to implement a palliative care program in South Florida in 2015. "Palliative care will be at the forefront of our healthcare delivery system, and we have to train professionals and create educational programs to raise awareness in our communities," said Dr. Ismael Roque-Velasco.

OpusCare of South Florida and Texas have been providing hospice care to the South Florida and Texas communities since 1991. In December of 2015, OpusCare of South Florida introduced Palliative care to their service model to further their initiatives to innovate and provide better-coordinated care to their patients. "As healthcare professionals, it is our duty to educate, empower and enrich the lives of our patients and those affected by their illnesses," expressed Ninsy Baldor, Vice President of Palliative Care for OpusCare. "In our palliative care program, we take a multidisciplinary team approach to customize a plan of care that enhances each person's quality of life. By treating the person and not just the disease, we can dignify the process while making a positive impact on their journey."

Looking into the future of palliative care and its evolution, Dr. Roque-Velasco, together with Dr. Irma Becerra, President of Marymount University, saw an opportunity to provide specialized training and research opportunities on issues connected to palliative care. Dr. Becerra has a long-standing excellent reputation for innovation, entrepreneurship, and transformational education. Her forward-thinking approach to learning is aligned with the mission and principles of OpusCare. The academic partnership between Marymount University and OpusCare was formed and aims to offer a Certificate Seminar Series on palliative care. The program launches this Spring, Friday, March 27th, in Miami, Florida. Future seminars will be featured at locations across the country. "The partnership between Marymount and OpusCare will benefit our students, faculty, and the entire health care community for generations to come," said Dr. Becerra. "Providing education, research, and interdisciplinary training on palliative care under Marymount's academic disciplines and accreditation is a fantastic opportunity."



(l-r) Dr. Hesham El-Rewini, Provost and Senior Vice President, Marymount University; Dr. Irma Becerra, President, Marymount University; Dr. Michelle Walters-Edwards, Associate Dean, School of Health and Professions, Marymount University; Dr. Ismael Roque-Velasco, President and CEO, OpusCare

The interdisciplinary conference will feature several physicians, palliative care professionals, healthcare leaders, and faculty members who will share different perspectives treating patients who have chronic illnesses, and the economic impact of palliative care on overall healthcare expenditure. This one-day conference will be of interest to healthcare practitioners and leaders and palliative care providers.

### **Marymount University's Mission:**

Marymount is a comprehensive Catholic university, guided by the traditions of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, that emphasized intellectual curiosity, service to others, and a global perspective. A Marymount education is grounded in the liberal arts, promotes career preparation, and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. A student-centered learning community that values diversity and focuses on the education of the whole person, Marymount guides the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development of each individual.

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