The 16th Annual Palliative Care Summit of California
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The 16th Annual Palliative Care Summit of California was held in Sacramento, California on April 3rd and 4th, 2024. Ms. Sandy Chen Stokes, founder of the Chinese American Coalition for Compassionate Care (CACCC), and board members: Ms. Jiayu Jeng, Ms. Yuaner Wu, and Mr. Simon Chow proudly represented CACCC at this event. The schedule of the event was well-organized and the content was rich and in-depth. From the keynote address to the general sessions, breakout sessions, and interactive sessions, the event organizers demonstrated their moral conscience and careful planning. The keynote speeches and program content covered a review of our national palliative care in the past, palliative care for vulnerable groups, a discussion on the current status of community palliative care services across the nation and California, as well as financial support, legislative improvements, and government policies and support for palliative care workers. Additionally, the event outlined the blueprint and direction for future palliative care in California. Overall, the summit was a success. Furthermore, CACCC’s exhibit booth, staffed by our board members and volunteers, received unprecedented attention, keen interest, and consultation compared to previous summits.

On the morning of April 3rd, attendees arrived and registered starting at 7:30 am, and the opening ceremony began at 8:00 am. At 9:00 am, Dr. Kimberly Curseen from Georgia delivered the keynote address. Her topic was "Shape of Equity in Palliative Care for Patients in Serious Illness". Dr. Curseen, an African American, has dedicated her life to caring for terminally ill patients and their families in low-income African American communities in Georgia. In her speech, she highlighted the severe disparity and inequity issues faced by African American patients for a long time and further pointed out how equity is lacking and not prioritized in African American communities by government decision-making bodies and public and private medical institutions. She strongly called on all stakeholders to act with conscience and strength to break down inequity and improve the plight faced by these ethnic groups, saying "Vulnerable population was produced by other people!" Dr. Curseen's excellent speech ended at 10:15 am.

The group activities that followed had five different topics which included: 1) end-of-life care for patients suffering from drug addiction, 2) alternative healing methods for grieving family members in palliative care, and 3) various medical institutions' ownership plans in the field of palliative care. Participants could only choose one activity around work and occupational reasons, so I chose end-of-life care for patients with drug addiction, which was very rewarding. In the afternoon group activity, Ms. Sandy Chen Stokes, the founder of CACCC hosted the "Barriers and Bridges to Caring for Chinese Americans" activity. Board volunteers Jiayu, Yuaner and I took on the facilitator role in the activity, accompanying the participants to experience the process of the "Heart to Heart Cafe ". After our activity ended, it received a lot of positive feedback and responses, and many medical institutions such as Kaiser Hospital headquarters and UCDMC expressed their willingness to invite CACCC to give a presentation. The final
general theme of the day was "How to simplify all procedures for palliative care advance planning." One of the inter-class activities was the Shintaido movement exercises which originated in Japan, taught by palliative care teacher Constance Borden of Zen Center to caregivers and their families during mindfulness training. This technique combines Buddhist mantra, Japanese martial arts movements, and traditional Chinese medicine theory and is called "Tenshingoso" (天真五相).

The keynote address on April 4th was delivered by Dr. Jared Rubinstein, who highlighted inequality in Palliative Care within the medical field, as well as biases and misunderstandings among other medical professionals. He also shared how he utilized YouTube to create numerous animated videos to address these issues and teaching patients. The general event included reports on the current status of eRegistry for POLST (Physicians Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment) and CCCC (Coalition for Compassionate Care of California). The group activities covered the aspects of pediatric palliative care, the use of artificial intelligence in palliative care, and palliative care for homeless patients.

The two-day event successfully concluded at 4:15 pm on April 4th. Notably, our sponsored booth was located next to CODA Alliance, the charitable organization that our Heart to Heart is derivative work based on copyrighted Coda Alliance Go Wish cards.

In gratitude, Ms. Stokes, organized an appreciation dinner on the evening of April 3rd, inviting Ms. Judy Thomas, a longtime supporter and mentor of CACCC. Also Rev. Larry Wildemuth from CODA Alliance, and Dr. Esther Luo, a palliative care physician at Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara, to thank them for their support of our mission.

Thanks to the leadership of the Coalition for Compassionate Care of California, the 16th Palliative Care Summit was successfully held. It was not only a reunion but also a sharing of the progress, achievements, and current challenges in palliative care services throughout California. The Summit concluded perfectly! We are looking forward to next year’s Summit with more innovations, participation, and achievements in palliative care services in the U.S.