OU School of Community Medicine Launches the Center for Palliative Care

TULSA (May 13, 2011) – With support totaling $975,000 in private funds, The OU School of Community Medicine has launched the Center for Palliative Care. The Center’s mission is to support and improve the health care status of patients and families in Northeastern Oklahoma, who face one or several complex diseases. According to principal investigator, Dr. Jeffrey Alderman, the Center will expand clinical Palliative Medicine efforts at targeted hospitals, nursing homes, and long-term acute care centers throughout the region. The Center will also develop and strengthen curricula in Palliative Medicine, geared toward educating medical students, residents and attending physicians – through increased campus visibility and direct community outreach. Finally, the Center will promote scholarly activity and original research, contributing to the growing evidence base that supports best practices in field of Palliative Medicine. “This gift provides an important means to coordinate interdisciplinary care that reduces physical, psychosocial and spiritual suffering among patients and families suffering from serious illness(es),” says Alderman.

Palliative Care aims to relieve suffering and improve quality of life for patients and families diagnosed with advanced illness. It is provided by an interdisciplinary team and offered in conjunction with all other appropriate forms of medical treatment. Palliative care programs
leverage a variety of hospital resources to effectively deliver the highest quality of care to
patients with advanced illness, integrating vigorous pain and symptom control into all stages of
treatment. The palliative care approach has been shown to decrease length of hospital and ICU
stays, ease patient transitions between care settings, and may improve survival in several disease
states. This results in increased patient and family satisfaction and better compliance with
hospital quality care standards.

The University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine is the first medical school
of its kind in the nation. Created in 2008 with a $50 million donation from the George Kaiser
Family Foundation, the school’s mission is to improve the health status of all Oklahomans,
particularly those in underserved urban and rural areas. The School will do this by building a
learning community through caring, learning, research, and collaboration.

The OU School of Community Medicine and its physician practice, OU Physicians, have
more than 300 physicians, 70 medical students and 50 physician assistant students. They perform
approximately 250,000 patient visits per year. For more information about the OU School of
Community Medicine, call 660-3098 or visit http://tulsa.ou.edu.

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