

Hebrew SeniorLife Creates Chaplaincy Initiative to Combat Isolation among Jewish Seniors in Greater Boston

Brings the Jewish Chaplaincy Council of Massachusetts under Its Spiritual Care Department

BOSTON (March 26, 2019)—Hebrew SeniorLife (HSL), a nonprofit senior care provider committed to improving the lives of older adults of all religions, today announced a new initiative designed specifically to combat isolation among frail Jewish seniors living in Greater Boston.

Going forward, the work of the Jewish Chaplaincy Council of Massachusetts (JCCM) will be delivered through a new Community Chaplaincy Initiative (CCI) at HSL. HSL already offers an award-winning clinical pastoral education program that is the only Jewish program of its type nationwide accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

The HSL CCI is led by HSL's Director of Spiritual Care Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow and Rabbi Judy Kummer, who served for 18 years as JCCM's Director. Seniors will access CCI services through HSL's rapidly expanding Home and Community Based Services, which serve more than 600 seniors daily and include Home Care, Hospice Care, and a recently launched community palliative care program.

According to Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow, HSL Director of Spiritual Care, "Isolation and loneliness are issues for many seniors of all backgrounds. Jewish seniors are the Jewish community's fastest growing segment and CCI allows us to provide the increasingly specialized services they will need in the decades ahead. CCI will be a natural extension of our chaplaincy work and home-based care, and will allow us to bring our best spiritual and physical care to ensure seniors remain connected and supported as they age."

"I'm delighted to join HSL to continue JCCM's mission of providing professional spiritual care services to isolated Jewish seniors in Greater Boston," said Rabbi Kummer. Rabbi Kummer will work to expand the number of non-Jewish eldercare facilities and acute-care settings where HSL provides spiritual care and connect isolated Jewish elders with other HSL services and supports.

HSL offers a comprehensive range of home and community-based services to older adults, including home health care and hospice care. Hebrew SeniorLife Home Care is staffed by seasoned professionals who specialize in the needs of older adults and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The continuation of the mission of JCCM as a new and collaborative initiative at HSL is possible due to funding from Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) and members of the Greater Boston Jewish community. "Providing compassionate care at this critical stage of life is an integral aspect of what it means to be a caring community," said Sarah Abramson, Vice President; Caring, Community Impact and Strategic Partnerships, CJP. "We're confident that delivering spiritual care to isolated elders through this new HSL initiative will ensure access across our community to high-quality Jewish chaplaincy services."

About HSL Spiritual Care

The Spiritual Care Team at HSL serves patients, residents, staff, and family members of all traditions and backgrounds. In HSL hospitals, home care and hospice, assisted living, and independent living communities, chaplains work as members of an interdisciplinary team to provide emotional support and to facilitate reflection and spiritual growth. With extensive training in clinical pastoral care, HSL chaplains have particular expertise in helping people find meaning and deepen their spiritual lives

as they encounter the challenges and opportunities of aging, in some cases struggle with dementia, and face the end of life.

The HSL Chaplaincy Institute, accredited by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), is an important part of the HSL Spiritual Care program. Seminarians come to study and intern with HSL from Greater Boston, nationally, and internationally. In addition to training future and current clergy and chaplains in pastoral care with elders, students increase HSL's ability to provide care throughout Hebrew Rehabilitation Center, providing over 5,000 hours of pastoral care to patients each year. The program is the only ACPE accredited program nationally focused on caring for Jewish elders. As one of the most respected CPE programs in the region, the majority of certified Jewish chaplains in Greater Boston and many chaplains of all backgrounds have studied at HSL during their education and certification process. For more information, please visit <https://www.hebrewseniorlife.org/clinical-pastoral-education>.

About Hebrew SeniorLife

Hebrew SeniorLife, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, is a national senior services leader uniquely dedicated to rethinking, researching and redefining the possibilities of aging. Founded in Boston in 1903, the nonprofit, non-sectarian organization today provides communities and health care for seniors, research into aging, and education for geriatric care providers. For more information about Hebrew SeniorLife, visit <https://www.hebrewseniorlife.org>, follow us on Twitter [@H_SeniorLife](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or read our [blog](#).

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