

## **DR. CHARLIE CHEN**

### **2026 Eduardo Bruera Award in Palliative Medicine Recipient**



The Canadian Society of Palliative Medicine (CSPM) is pleased to present the 2026 Eduardo Bruera Award in Palliative Medicine to Dr. Charlie Chen. This peer-nominated award, named in honour of Dr. Eduardo Bruera, recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of palliative care. It is awarded jointly by CSPM and the Division of Palliative Care Medicine at the University of Alberta. This year's award highlights excellence in program administration and leadership in palliative medicine.

Dr. Chen is a respected leader whose work spans clinical care, system design, education, and physician development across hospital, outpatient, community, hospice, and regional settings. He currently serves as Medical Lead for Physician Diversity, Wellness, and Leadership Development within the Physician Experience portfolio at Alberta Health Services (AHS) and is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Departments of Oncology and Family Medicine at the Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary.

He has held numerous senior leadership roles across Western Canada, including Medical Director of Palliative Care for Fraser Health in BC (2017–2019) and Medical Director and Section Chief for the AHS Calgary Zone Palliative and End-of-Life Care Program (2019–2023). His longstanding commitment to advance care planning is reflected in his work as Physician Educator and Medical Lead for ACP/GCD initiatives across two provinces for more than a decade. He also served as Program Director for Palliative Medicine at the University of British Columbia, supporting both the Family Medicine Year of Added Competency and the Royal College Adult Subspecialty Program.

At the core of Dr. Chen's leadership is his ability to connect people and ideas. Widely regarded as a bridge-builder, he fosters collaboration, psychological safety, and shared purpose across teams. He has created innovative structures to support clinicians, including a real-time WhatsApp community of practice for peer consultation and a zone-

wide physician peer support program. His leadership is consistently described as engaging, grounded, and deeply compassionate – qualities recognized by the 2023 Gavin Stuart Award for Clinical Excellence and Professionalism from the Department of Oncology at Cumming.

Dr. Chen has made substantial contributions to system improvement and quality in palliative care. He established a Calgary Zone PEOLC Quality Improvement Medical Lead role to embed continuous improvement into clinical practice and has developed region-wide curricula and tools to address system needs. His work has strengthened care consistency, including developing clinical resources during the COVID-19 pandemic and contributing to provincial and national initiatives. As a non-voting member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's Palliative Medicine Subspecialty Committee, he supported the establishment of one of Canada's first two-year subspecialty training programs, helping to advance national capacity in the field.

His work also reflects a strong commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and patient-centred care. In Fraser Health, he helped establish an advance care planning (ACP) consultation team to promote patient-centred care. In Alberta, He has contributed to medico-legal education on ACP, supported large-scale electronic medical record implementation with practical clinician-facing tools, and led updates to clinical protocols and ACP resources. He adapted the Serious Illness Conversation Guide for use with substitute decision-makers in long-term care and, as a Pallium LEAP Leader and master facilitator, has contributed to national curricula focused on early identification of needs, care planning, and team communication. He currently serves as Co-Chair of the Acute Care Alberta Patient and Family Advisory Council, advancing care design through the perspectives of patients, families, and caregivers.

Education and mentorship are central to Dr. Chen's work. He is known for cultivating reflective practice, confidence, and strong communication skills in learners. He leads regular teaching for palliative care trainees and facilitates interdisciplinary workshops on serious illness conversations, shared decision-making, and communication across multiple specialties. His contributions to medical education have been recognized with the 2023 Exceptional Service in Palliative Care Academic Teaching Award and the 2025 Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching from the Cumming School of Medicine.

A defining aspect of Dr. Chen's leadership is his commitment to physician wellness and professional sustainability. Trained in mindfulness and Mindful Self-Compassion, he teaches these practices within healthcare and has helped build and sustain physician peer support infrastructure. He is also a certified executive coach, an Associate Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation, and serves as an internal coach for medical leaders within Alberta Health Services.

Within CSPM, Dr. Chen has made significant and lasting contributions. He has served on the Board of Directors and as Founder and Chair of the Wellness Committee (2019–2024),

advancing physician wellness initiatives nationally. His work includes establishing the CSPM Peer Support Team under WellDoc Canada, contributing to the CSPM Wellness Position Statement, leading the Society's first Schwartz Rounds, and moderating numerous wellness sessions. He has been a frequent speaker at the CSPM Advanced Learning in Palliative Medicine Conference and moderated the CSPM Hot Topics Webinar Series (2019–2024). Most recently, he led the development of the CSPM Leadership Module Series and co-authored the module on moral distress.

Colleagues describe Dr. Chen as compassionate, thoughtful, and deeply trustworthy: a steady guide who brings generosity, creativity, and integrity to his work. His contributions have had a meaningful impact on patients, families, colleagues, and healthcare systems across Canada.

The CSPM gratefully acknowledges Dr. Chen's outstanding leadership and enduring contributions to palliative medicine.