

QNI launches Professor Kieran Sweeney Award to 'rediscover the humanity' in patients



The Queen's
Nursing Institute

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Community nursing charity The Queen's Nursing Institute has announced a new, special award for 2011 in memory of one of its former Trustees, Professor Kieran Sweeney, who died last year.

Kieran Sweeney was an honorary professor of general practice at the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry in the West Country, and a GP in one of the first nurse-led practices in the UK. Kieran, who had been a Trustee of the QNI since 2007, was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma at the age of 57 and died at home with his family on Christmas Eve 2009.

QNI Practice Development Manager Anne Pearson said: 'This award has been created in Kieran's memory and with the approval of his family, to offer a multi-disciplinary team the opportunity to improve care for patients in the final stages of life. Through the publicity and dissemination that will follow, we hope to influence the day-to-day practice of many more individuals and teams.'

Shortly before he died, Kieran was filmed talking about his experience of care during his final illness. This film has been made available as an educational resource for health professionals. In it, Kieran said: 'Medicine is not solely a technical activity and pursuit; medicine is about understanding and being with people at the edge of the human predicament.' He talked about the 'small humiliations that are repeatedly heaped upon patients', and believed that health professionals sometimes need to be reminded to 'rediscover the humanity in a patient'. His film can be viewed at http://www.elfh.org.uk/projects/lead/patient_journey.html.

The award will provide £2,500 to a multi-disciplinary team to enable them to make practical changes to their services or ways of working, or to undertake training, in order to improve care for patients at and after the point of diagnosis of a life-threatening illness. Anne Pearson added: 'we will be looking for the proposal that will have the most practical and emotional impact on patients.'

Mrs Barbara Sweeney said: 'We are very honoured that the QNI should wish to recognise Kieran's contribution through this award. The project's aims are very much in keeping with his values of caring for the person within the patient and his belief that the whole team needs to be actively aware of the impact of their actions and behaviours. He would be immensely humbled to know that this very practical award is

being offered in his memory’.

QNI Chair Rosalynde Lowe added: ‘We were immensely grateful to Kieran for his contribution as a Trustee of the QNI, not only in helping to shape our nursing in the home-focused strategy, but also in his sensitive understanding of community nursing and primary health care generally. We miss his wisdom, his drive and his experience on Council, and his enthusiasm and passion for excellence in patient care. I hope this award will ensure that his values live on in community practice.’

The closing date for applications for the award is 14 March 2011, and the winning team will be invited to receive the award at the QNI’s Spring Awards Ceremony on 12 May 2011.

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Notes for Editors:

1. More information about the Award including the application form and guidance is available on the QNI’s website at <http://www.qni.org.uk/awards/kieran-sweeney-award.html>
2. The QNI is the charity dedicated to improving patient care in the home and in the community.

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