

# PARADIM

News from the James L. Hall Jr. Center for Mind, Body and Spirit

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## Medical Schools offer Spiritual Training

centered approach to healing. Matthews himself conducts 'spiritual interviews' with patients during routine medical examinations. Such discussions revolve around individual patient beliefs that may someday help them cope with illness.

Dr. Christina Puchalski, NHR conference co-chair and internal medicine resident at George Washington Medical Center, says spiritual talks also make the doctor-patient relationship stronger. While critics worry that the trend toward spirituality in medicine may lead to an emphasis on specific dogmas, Puchalski disagrees. Spirituality is usually a relationship with God, she says, but for others, it's a connection with nature or music. It's whatever or whomever gives your life meaning.

## Medical Schools offer Spiritual Training

Internal Medicine News reports many medical schools are now offering students spirituality training — ~~stressing the role of a patient's~~ spiritual beliefs within the healing process.

Research is revealing that a rich spiritual life may actually improve patient outcomes. In 1997, results of a 28 year study of more than 5,000 California residents showed that regular churchgoers had lower death rates and better overall health than those who stayed home on Sundays.

Dr. Dale Matthews, associate professor of medicine at Georgetown, and senior fellow at the National Institute of Healthcare Research (NIHR), says the spirituality movement is part of a general trend away from disease-centered care to a more patient-

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