



Collaborative for Palliative Care
*Supporting your journey through serious illness:
 Education, research and advocacy*



**Interdisciplinary Aging, Public Health, and Palliative Care
 Certificate Program**
Enhancing the Health and Social Services Workforce

FACULTY BIOGRAPHIES



DIRECTOR: Mary Beth Quaranta Morrissey, PhD, MPH, JD

Dr. Mary Beth Quaranta Morrissey is a gerontological and health social work researcher and New York attorney concentrating in health and public health law with deep experience in palliative care and hospice, including in the development of palliative care workforce education and training. Dr. Morrissey currently holds the appointments of Associate Professor and Director of the PhD Program in Social Welfare at the Yeshiva University Wurzweiler School of Social Work, New York, NY. Dr. Morrissey is also the

founder and president of the Collaborative for Palliative Care, New York, and founder and director of the Collaborative’s *Aging, Health and Public Health, and Palliative Care Certificate Program* under the joint auspices of the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Dr. Morrissey is the past chair of the New York City Bar Association Bioethical Issues Committee and currently sits on the City Bar Immigration and Nationality Law Committee. She presently serves as the Vice Chair of the Health Law Section of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) and is past chair of the Section’s Public Health Committee. Dr. Morrissey is also past chair of NYSBA’s Task Force on Safeguarding the Public’s Health and Mandatory Vaccination and past chair of NYSBA’s Health Law Section Task Force on COVID-19, as well as past member of NYSBA’s Task Force on Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care.



CO-DIRECTOR: Thomas V. Caprio, MD, MPH, MS, CMD, HMDC, FACP, AGSF, FAAHPM

Dr. Thomas Caprio is Professor of Medicine/Geriatrics, Psychiatry, Dentistry, Clinical Nursing, and Public Health Sciences at the University of Rochester (UR). He serves as director of the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center which oversees the federally funded Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, providing education and training related to geriatrics, palliative care, and dementia care for health care professionals and family caregivers across New York State. He is the Chief Medical Officer of UR Medicine Home Care and the Medical Director for the UR Medicine Hospice program. Dr.

Caprio received his MD from the State University of New York at Buffalo, completed his residency, fellowship, and postdoctoral training at the University of Rochester Medical Center, then completed

his Master of Public Health degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, and his Master's in Health Professions Education from the University of Rochester Warner Graduate School of Education. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians, fellow of the American Geriatrics Society, and fellow of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

PROGRAM FACULTY (alphabetical)



Beverly D. Carter, DM

Dr. Carter works with The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services to identify, and prioritize the needs of the elderly, then to create comprehensive and coordinated plans to meet those needs through advocacy for responsive policy, actions, resources, and legislation. She has expertise in organizational leadership, program development and design with a strong international background including extensive world travel and alumnus status with Harvard University's Center for International Development (WorldTeach ~ Kenya); medical missions with EJAYES Charities to Nigeria (Nasarawa, Kano, Abuja, Umuahia), Haiti (post-earthquake) and Educational missions in Kenya (Western Province) and Nigeria (Umuahia). Her

travels prepared her well for her presentation at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Conference (March 2012) addressing the challenges to empowering rural women from the perspectives of educating young girls, leadership, global literacy, diversity, and social responsibility. Dr. Carter is the founder of A Renewed Life Global! LLC which is dedicated to alleviating the impact of oppression in human rights and social justice related life events and enhancing emotional health and wellness in our global communities. She presented The One question that will change the impact of your leadership and your life, at the Westchester Women's Summit (September 2020).

Christopher Comfort, MD

Dr. Christopher Comfort is currently the chief operating officer at Calvary Hospital, Inc, a palliative care system offering palliative inpatient hospital services, inpatient hospice services, home hospice services, and community-based palliative and case management services. He served as the Medical Director of Calvary Hospital, Calvary Hospice, and the Palliative Wound Care Center for the past twenty years.



John Dow, JD

John Dow is Assistant Counsel for Trinity Health's locations in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. John's practice includes addiction treatment centers, inpatient and community-based programs for the elderly, and support for over twelve thousand Trinity employees at multiple hospitals and over 170 other locations. John also specializes in provider-payor relations and participates in national negotiations with health insurance carriers, giving him unique insight into healthcare payment mechanics. A firm believer in the power of the law's ability, when joined with ethical behavior, to bring about a more just experience for patients, John especially enjoys working with

Trinity's ethics officers and chaplaincy staff. John was previously Assistant General Counsel for NYSARC, Inc., a statewide disability services provider, and Associate Counsel for state Senator Patricia Ritchie.



Bruce Jennings, MA

Bruce Jennings is Adjunct Associate Professor of Health Policy at Vanderbilt University Medical School. He is also Senior Advisor at The Hastings Center, where he served from 1991 through 1999 as Executive Director. He has been active in the development of the field of public health ethics and taught one of the first courses on that subject in the country at the Yale School of Public Health from 1995-2014. From 2003-2009 he served as member and Chair of the Ethics Advisory Committee at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). From 2017-2019 he was chair of the American Public Health Association task force charged with writing a new code of ethics for Public Health. In 2020 he received a Distinguished Career Award from the American Public Health Association for his work in public health ethics. He is

currently editor of a book series on Public Health and Health Policy Ethics published by Springer-Nature. A political scientist by training, Mr. Jennings has written and edited twenty-nine books and numerous articles on bioethics and public policy issues.



Melissa Lang, DrPH, MPH, MPA, MA

Dr. Melissa Lang is the CEO at the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut which provides services to older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. Dr. Lang's background includes a range of experience in community-based health services, including cancer care, hospice and palliative care, long-term care and disabilities, and aging services. Her experience in public health and community settings includes expanding services for marginalized populations, addressing health inequities, and strengthening health services for older adults. She actively engages in

advocacy and policy development on issues related to community-based long-term services and supports, Medicaid and Medicare, family caregiving, end-of-life care, and strategies that strengthen the public health workforce. She is committed to deepening the focus on health equity by engaging communities in identifying disparities and building partnerships that address health-related social needs. Dr. Lang is a faculty member at the Center for Community Engagement and Health Equity at Yale and Co-Chairs the Center's Community Advisory Board. She serves on several committees and boards in both CT and NY, including the adult Ethics Committee at Yale New Haven Hospital, The Collaborative for Palliative Care, Connecticut Age Well Collaborative Steering Committee, and State Society on Aging of NY. She is also a facilitator for the National Center to Reframe Aging led by The Gerontological Society of America. Dr. Lang is co-author of the book, *A Public Health Strategy for Living, Aging and Dying: Designing Elder-Centered and Palliative Systems of Care, Environments, Services and Supports* (Routledge, 2018). She received her doctorate in Public Health from New York Medical College, Master of Public Health and Master of Public Administration degrees from Columbia

University and holds advanced certificates and training in bioethics and clinical ethics consultation from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Columbia University.



Ann Leonhardt-Caprio, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, FAHA

Dr. Ann Leonhardt-Caprio is the Program Coordinator of the University of Rochester Comprehensive Stroke Center at Strong Memorial Hospital and Assistant Professor of Clinical Nursing at the University of Rochester. She received undergraduate degrees in nursing at the University of Pittsburgh, and Master of Science and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from the University of Rochester. She joined the UR stroke team in 2006 as a clinical nurse practitioner specializing in both inpatient and outpatient management of cerebrovascular disease, and continues to maintain an active outpatient practice. She assumed the role of Program Coordinator in 2011, and in 2013 led efforts to achieve the hospital’s certification as a Joint Commission/AHA Comprehensive Stroke Center. In 2018 she was named Co-Director of Quality and Safety for the University of Rochester Department of Neurology. Dr. Leonhardt-Caprio’s professional interests include stroke care of older adults, transitions of care, interprofessional education, and process improvement. As an active member of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, she has been elected as a Fellow of the American Heart Association and the 2022 recipient of the Council of Cardiovascular and Stroke Nursing’s “Stroke Article of the Year” award. Locally she serves as president of the Rochester American Heart Association Board.



Laura M. Robinson, MPH

With over thirty years’ experience in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), Ms. Robinson’s background includes direct care, staff training, program development, regulatory oversight & compliance, and qualitative and quantitative research. She has been an NTG Regional Affiliated Trainer since 2014 and participates on the Geriatric Assessment Clinic team at the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Service Office (FLDDSO) in Rochester, NY. Ms. Robinson is currently the Program Coordinator for the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center (FLGEC) at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) and is also a part-time doctoral student in Human Development at the Warner School, University of Rochester. Her doctoral studies will investigate re-defining intelligence for older adults with IDD.



Frederick J. Wertz, PhD

Dr. Frederick Wertz earned his Ph.D. at Duquesne University in clinical psychology and currently he is Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, Fordham University. His career has featured psychotherapy with older adults, teaching of psychology, university administration, scholarship, editing, and service to his profession and communities. He has taught and supervised doctoral students in clinical psychology, chaired three academic departments including Psychology, and served as Interim Dean of Fordham College at Lincoln Center.

Dr. Wertz's scholarship has addressed critical perspectives on theory, history, research methodology, cultural context, and philosophical foundations of psychology. He has written on psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, psychometrics, and qualitative research. He has developed phenomenological research methods and written on research methodology, e.g., Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis... (2011, Guilford Press). He has served as editor of the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* and as guest editor of *The Humanistic Psychologist*. He edited *The Humanistic Movement: Recovering the Person in Psychology* (Gardner Press). Dr. Wertz served as president of the American Psychological Association's Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Society for Humanistic Psychology, and Society for Qualitative inquiry in Psychology and is an APA Accreditation Site Visitor. He currently serves on the Community Relations Board of the Milan MI Federal Correctional Institution.