

medical director

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# Big Bend Hospice announces new medical director

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Big Bend Hospice

Contributor

Niharika Suchak, MD has been named Big Bend Hospice's (BBH) new medical director. Dr. Suchak has served as BBH's Associate Medical Director since February 2016.

Given the unique nature of the hospice industry, a medical director has slightly different duties and responsibilities than a general practice doctor. As BBH's Medical Director, Dr. Suchak will be responsible for supervising BBH hospice physicians who create a comprehensive medical care plan for each patient and ensures that every member of the hospice team, caregivers and the patient's family, are knowledgeable of the care plan. As the needs of the patient change, the medical team adjusts the plan accordingly and informs every one of the changes. ↑

"Our hospice physicians spend a surprising amount of time talking with families and explaining what's happening with the patient. Ensuring this is done with compassion while also following state and federal regulations is an important role of our medical director," said Bill Wertman, BBH's CEO. "I am confident that Dr. Suchak has the knowledge and experience to lead this team."

Dr. Suchak is a clinician-educator and an associate professor in the Department of Geriatrics at Florida State University College of Medicine (FSUCOM) in Tallahassee, Fla. She is the Director of Year 1 Clinical Skills at FSUCOM, Medical Director of FSU TeleHealth™, and Chair of the FSUCOM Telehealth Committee.

Dr. Suchak is board certified through the American Board of Internal Medicine in Internal Medicine, Geriatric Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. She has extensive clinical and leadership experience in a multitude of healthcare environments.

Dr. Suchak completed her medical school training at the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, India. She completed her internal medicine residency training at The Union Memorial Hospital (UMH), in Baltimore, Md., and furthered her training by completing a fellowship in Geriatric Medicine also at UMH. She has previously held academic appointments at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and at University of Medicine and Dentistry in NJ, as well as other administrative roles such as Medical Director, Extended Care Unit and VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Okla. and Deputy Medical Director, House Calls for Elders Program and Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack, NJ.

Dr. Suchak is the immediate past President of the Florida Geriatrics Society and serves as co-chair for the American Geriatrics Society International Activities Special Interest Group. She is a member of the American Board of Internal Medicine Geriatric Medicine Board Exam Committee. She regularly serves as the international coordinator and member of the organizing committee for the International Congress on Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine. She has presented regionally, nationally and internationally on various geriatric medicine and medical education topics. In 2012, Dr. Suchak received the Clinician of the Year Award by the American Geriatrics Society.

As BBH Medical Director, Dr. Suchak will also ensure all safety and health standards are being met. It's her job to use unbiased data to ensure the care provided is of the highest level and to check for any areas that need improvement.

"I am honored and excited to start my new role at BBH and look forward to supporting the BBH team in their service to the local community," said Suchak. "I am grateful to join a team of competent and compassionate professionals who always put the patient and caregiver first. I hope to be able to assist the BBH team in its commitment to patient-centered care, quality service and community education programs."

About Big Bend Hospice, Inc.

Big Bend Hospice, your hometown hospice since 1983, is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) hospice provider serving Leon, Franklin, Gadsden, Liberty, Madison, Jefferson, Taylor and Wakulla counties. The mission of Big Bend Hospice is to inspire hope by positively impacting the way our community experiences serious illness or

grief – one family at a time. For more information, please visit the Big Bend Hospice website:  
<https://www.bigbendhospice.org/>.

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