

Focus on Faculty #47

Krista Lawlor



[Dr. Krista Lawlor](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and an Associate Member of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology. She was born and raised in Montreal where she graduated from McGill medical school and completed her family medicine residency at St. Mary's Hospital. She went on to work for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, traveling to each of the James Bay communities for four years while living in Chisasibi. But it was her early love for palliative care that brought her back to Montreal to continue her training and to practice palliative care full time. She completed a fellowship in Palliative Medicine at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH), followed by a 6-month fellowship in Pediatric Palliative Medicine at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Dr. Lawlor has worked as Program Director for Palliative Medicine as well as Site Director at the RVH and Clinical Teaching Unit Director at the MUHC. In order to develop her teaching skills, she completed the McGill Teaching Scholar program, focusing her research on compassion in medical education. She is a faculty member of the McGill Programs in Whole Person Care and teaches in the Mindful Medical Practice course given to second year medical students at McGill. She has also had the opportunity to develop her skills in teaching mindfulness to elementary school children through the Dovetail Toolbox Project and spearheaded its implementation at her daughter's elementary school in Montreal.

Dr. Lawlor has served as a collaborator on research projects. For example, she was involved in a project with Dr. Lise Fillion, *Soutenir la Résilience de Soignants en Soins Palliatifs Spécialisés* and has been collaborating with Dr. Anna Towers on the project, *An evaluation of subcutaneous needle drainage of lymphedema in palliative care*. She is co-author with Sheldon Solomon on a

book chapter entitled, *Death Anxiety: the Challenge and the Promise of Whole Person Care* in *Whole Person Care: A New Paradigm for the 21st Century*, Hutchinson Tom A. (Ed.), New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 2011.

In 2014 Dr. Lawlor was awarded the Herbert S. Lang Award in Oncology and Surgery. In 2017 she received the Wellness Award for Clinical Teachers from McGill University's Medical School Wellness Committee. This is a student voted award that recognizes a clinical teacher who best models a commendable life-work balance through expert professionalism, clinical competence and exemplary self-care.

Dr. Lawlor is very happy with the direction her career has taken: "I have been so incredibly lucky to build a career in palliative care. Not only have I had the opportunity to call people like Dr. Balfour Mount and Dr. Ina Cummings my mentors, I have worked with and learned from the most remarkable multidisciplinary team members and colleagues, and from the patients themselves over all these years. I have been given the opportunity to do what I love...to teach and to be at the bedside for one of the most meaningful and intimate times in people's lives." Moreover, it was through palliative care that she met her husband, Dr. Stephen Liben, who is director of Pediatric Palliative Care at the Montreal Children's Hospital. Their family includes a daughter, two sons and Poncho the cat. On the ideal day you will find them hanging out together on the dock at their cottage in the Laurentians.