

Robert A. Bergamini, MD has spent most of his 35-year career as a pediatric hematologist-oncologist, and from the beginning, included palliative care as a priority of his practice before the field was formally defined. This approach to whole person care provided a firm foundation for his current role as a pediatric palliative care provider in rural communities combining in-person clinics with telemedicine to provide comprehensive care to children in need.

Dr. Bergamini completed his Fellowship in Pediatric Hematology Oncology at St. Louis Children's Hospital, Washington University Department of Pediatrics, and while serving as Clinical Instructor in Pediatrics at Washington University, Dr. Bergamini entered private practice at Mercy St. Louis in 1985, establishing a new pediatric oncology program which included a comprehensive outpatient center- the first of its kind in the area. Dr. Bergamini and his team established the first support group in the St. Louis area for siblings of children with cancer, and an educational support and intervention program to provide supplemental educational assistance and diagnostic testing. With the help of patient families and staff, Friends of Kids with Cancer, a local charity was founded.

Dr. Bergamini later served as Mercy's ministry-level Medical Director for Palliative Care, serving 39 hospitals and outpatient facilities/clinics across Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas. As the medical liaison to local faith-based communities. His initiatives included providing palliative care education in the communities served by Mercy, and under his leadership, the Mercy Kids Complex Care Team provided children with complex illnesses access to care through a combination of outreach clinics, home care, and telemedicine across the multiple communities served by Mercy.

Under Dr. Bergamini's leadership as Mercy's medical director of palliative care services, programs launched in three new communities and a pilot telemedicine program for palliative care and hospice care was established to meet the needs of the ministry's large rural population where density is less than six people per square mile. Mercy also established an accredited palliative care fellowship and welcomed their first fellow on July 1, 2017.

Dr. Bergamini was appointed in 2013 to the Supportive Care Coalition's Board of Directors and served as the chair for 2019. He currently represents the Supportive Care Coalition at the National Academy of Medicine on the Roundtable for the Care of People with Serious Illness.