MEDICAL CENTER HOUR
A Program of the UVA Center for Health Humanities and Ethics

Thursday, 8 October 2026 | 12:00 to 1:00 pm
Leonard Sandridge Auditorium, McKim Hall

Co-presented with the Haney Collaborative, Compassionate Care Initiative

LISTENING FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST: QUESTIONS THAT CHANGE END-OF-LIFE CARE

Diane Button
Founding Partner, Bay Area End-of-Life Doula Alliance, Novato, California

In end-of-life care, we are highly skilled at managing symptoms, coordinating services, and supporting families. Yet, even with excellent care, one essential question often remains unspoken: do we truly know what matters most to this person—right now? In this professional development talk, Diane Button introduces practical tools and questions she has used with hundreds of clients to move beyond assumptions and routines, deepen connection, and uncover what matters most. Participants will leave with a simple framework for asking better questions, listening more deeply, and allowing space for the answers to guide care.

Resources:

- Button, D. (2026). *What Matters Most: Lessons the Dying Teach Us About Living.* Penguin Random House
- Button, D. (2021). *Dear Death: Finding Meaning in Life, Peace in Death, and Joy in an Ordinary Day.* Better World Publishing
- Button, D. (2022). *Workbook and Companion Guide for Dear Death.* Better World Publishing

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and apply at least three practical questions or conversational phrases that can help end-of-life professionals efficiently and compassionately assess how patients and families are doing and create deeper connection.
2. Demonstrate a simple framework for exploring and identifying a patient's emotional, relational, and spiritual priorities at the end of life, and describe how this information can be used to guide more person-centered care.

Diane Button is a founding partner of the Bay Area End-of-Life Doula Alliance in Northern California, an instructor in the End-of-Life Doula Certificate Program at the University of Vermont, and the best-selling author of *What Matters Most: Lessons the Dying Teach Us About Living*, which she wrote for Maria Shriver's imprint, The Open Field. Ms. Button holds a master's degree in counseling psychology. Her thesis, *The Components of a Meaningful Life*, undergirds her life's work of helping people find greater meaning and peace in both life and death. In particular, she helps individuals and families navigate the end of life with greater understanding, intention, and compassion. She runs a nonprofit foundation. She is author of several books and, with Angela Shook and Gabby Jimenez, coauthor of *The Doula Tool Kit: The Complete Practical Guide for End-of-Life Doulas*. Her books and expertise have been featured on numerous programs and podcasts. Learn more at www.dianebutton.com.

NEXT MEDICAL CENTER HOUR: Friday, 9 October (tomorrow!), 12:15-1:15 pm. THE LOST ART OF DYING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES, with Lydia Dugdale MD MAR, Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, NYC. Educational Resource Center, 2A, UVAHealth, Lee Street. This joint program with Medicine Grand Rounds is also copresented with the Center for Global Health Equity.

Course Description: The Medical Center Hour is the School of Medicine's public forum on medicine and society. Produced by the Center for Health Humanities and Ethics, the series includes History of the Health Sciences Lectures co-presented with Historical Collections in the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library. The series is also home to several annual lectures of the Schools of Medicine and Nursing.
Target Audience: Physicians, nurses, other health professionals, students, faculty, university staff, and the public
Desired Outcomes: At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Discuss expert-level content of current, sometimes controversial issues in medicine, health, ethics, and society that directly affect interprofessional clinical practice
- Apply knowledge and skills across medicine and allied humanities and sciences fields related to interdisciplinary and interprofessional approaches to issues and problem-solving
- Utilize multiple perspectives such as social, historical, cultural, ethical, legal, religious/spiritual, and artistic to grasp their influence on medicine, clinical practice, and the health of the public
- Transfer knowledge into community-based and clinical approaches to health improvement and wellbeing, utilizing the health humanities, ethics, and arts as explored in this forum

Accreditation & Designation Statements:

In support of improving patient care, UVA Health Continuing Education (UVAHCE) is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the

Physicians: UVAHCE designates this live activity for a maximum of ***1*** *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.™* Healthcare professionals should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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Disclosure Summary: No one in a position to control the content of this educational activity has disclosed a relevant financial interest or relationship with any commercial interest.

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