**Supplemental Table 1. Major Themes and Subthemes Influencing Choice of Compassion or Competence Across Scenarios**

| Major Themes                                                                 | Surgical/Acute Care Subthemes*                                                                 | Chronic Care Subthemes†                                                                 | End-of-Life Care Subthemes†                                                                 | Pediatric Care Subthemes*                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Explicit beliefs regarding the value of compassion and competence           | 1. Compassion is nice but not essential                                                        | 1. Compassion leads to better patient compliance and outcomes                          | 1. There is value in competence to ensure all treatment avenues are explored, but compassion is necessary to help patients cope with prognosis | 1. Competence most important when caring for a child                                      |
|                                                                               | 2. Skill and ability are essential for the best outcome                                        | 2. Lack of compassion leads to faulty advice                                            |                                                                                             | 2. Child will not understand compassion                                                    |
|                                                                               | 3. Desire to extend or prolong life                                                            | 3. Compassion to support lifestyle changes and adjust to patient limitations            |                                                                                             | 3. Competence leads to accurate diagnosis and best outcomes                                |
| Impact of emotional and mental health on medical experiences                 | 1. More comfort and confidence in surgery if competence is established                         | 1. Compassion needed to provide emotional support for life-changing disease              | 1. Compassion can potentially impact how a patient and family cope during this emotional time | 1. Compassion needed for the child as they are a formative age and negative interactions with physicians could have long-lasting impact on their future health |
|                                                                               | 2. Emotional trauma is temporary, technical trauma is not                                      | 2. Emotional health influences physical health                                          | 2. Compassion is needed to help patient accept their prognosis and enjoy what time they have left |                                                                                             |
|                                                                               |                                                                                               | 3. Compassion towards family is a necessity                                             |                                                                                             |                                                                                             |
| Type and frequency of healthcare exposure                                    | 1. Lack of compassion is tolerable in small doses                                              | 1. Long-term management requires rapport, relationship and compassion                   | 1. Competence and skill no longer matters at the end of life                                | 1. Need competence for safety when treating/performing a procedure on a child               |
|                                                                               | 2. Difference between short-term care of surgery and long-term care                           | 2. Prioritize and understand quality of life                                             | 2. Compassion and patience are needed when discussing end-of-life care                       | 2. Compassion needed for any painful therapy                                               |
| Perceived role of the physician in various clinical vignettes               | 1. Emotional support is not the job of the physician                                          | 1. Physicians must be able to counsel on lifestyle changes and not just medical management | 1. Physicians must make the patient feel cared for even at the end of life                  | 1. Emotional support is not the job of the physician                                      |
|                                                                               | 2. Physician’s role is to do no harm and make no mistakes                                     | 2. Physicians act as a liaison between patient and other resources                      | 2. Physicians must also care for the family                                                 | 2. The parents, family, and/or nursing staff should provide compassion                     |
|                                                                               | 3. Paying for competence, not compassion                                                      | 3. Physicians must advocate for patient decisions regarding end-of-life care            |                                                                                             |                                                                                             |

*Overall preference for competence
†Overall preference for compassion
You are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Dr. Lona Mody of Michigan Medicine aimed at gaining a better understanding of patients’ perceptions of physician competence vs compassion in a variety of situations. Through this study we hope to be able to educate physicians across numerous specialties on how to better connect and communicate with their patients in order to provide them with the best care possible. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and anonymous. No one will be able to determine your identity or your involvement in this study. Your participation will have no bearing on the care you receive at Michigan Medicine. If you choose to participate, please fill out the attached survey and return it using the enclosed stamped envelope. We have included $5 with this mailing in appreciation of your time in completing the questions and your contribution to our study.

Clinical Cases
On the following pages you will find seven short clinical cases to read followed by several questions. While reading each case we invite you to place yourself in the shoes of the patient and answer questions based on how you would feel in each situation. Physician competency refers to the physician’s knowledge and skills that allows him or her to provide good medical treatment. Physician compassion refers to the physician’s ability to be sympathetic, kind, and sensitive to the needs of his or her patients.

Case #1
In the last few years you have noticed that your vision has been worsening. During the day it seems like you are viewing the world through a fog, and at night lights appear fuzzy and make it difficult for you to drive. You go see your ophthalmologist (an eye surgeon) who does an examination and tells you that you have cataracts in both eyes and will need surgery. Cataract surgery is very common and takes only 15-30 minutes. However, you are awake during the procedure, and there are several risks associated with it.

How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant    ☐ Slightly Important    ☐ Important    ☐ Very important    ☐ Essential
How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Case #2
You are sitting with your family at dinner one night when you start to experience a strange smell. The next thing you remember is being on the floor surrounded by paramedics and your family trying to get you into an ambulance. You are brought to the hospital where a surgeon tells you that you have had a seizure and orders imaging of your head. The images reveal a large tumor in one of the lobes of your brain, and you will require surgery to have it removed. The surgery is risky and may result in permanent problems with speech, memory, muscle strength, balance, or vision if not done correctly. Additionally, there is a risk of death if a brain bleed, clot, or infection occurs.

How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Case #2 Continued...
A complication occurs during surgery and your doctor has to make a quick decision to save your life that will leave you with one of several possible disabilities.

How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?
□ Unimportant  □ Slightly Important  □ Important  □ Very important  □ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?
□ Unimportant  □ Slightly Important  □ Important  □ Very important  □ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?
□ Yes  □ No

Case #3
A few months ago you were diagnosed with advanced lung cancer which, despite treatment, has continued to worsen and spread throughout your body. You were admitted to the hospital two weeks ago for a lung infection, and because of the cancer you required a tube placed down your windpipe to help you breathe. This morning the tube was finally removed and you are breathing on your own with the help of extra oxygen. Your doctor comes to see you and your family and discusses that due to the extent of the cancer it is likely that you will die soon.

How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?
□ Unimportant  □ Slightly Important  □ Important  □ Very important  □ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?
□ Unimportant  □ Slightly Important  □ Important  □ Very important  □ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)
Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Case #4
Over the past few months you have been thirstier than usual and have started to lose weight. No matter how much water you drink you always feel like you need more, and you have been urinating frequently even during the night. You visit your doctor who sits down with you after running some blood tests and tells you that you have diabetes. If left uncontrolled, you may develop permanent nerve damage throughout your body, vision loss, and kidney damage. Your doctor would like to control your disease with diet and exercise first before beginning medications, but you just started working night shifts at a new job and don’t even know how you’re going to find time or money to start exercising and eating healthy.

How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?

☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?

☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Case #5
Over the past few months you have noticed yourself becoming more short of breath. At rest you can breathe ok, but you can barely walk around your house anymore without having to stop to catch your breath. You’ve also noticed that your ankles and legs have been swelling and you have gained several pounds. You see your doctor who runs some tests and then meets with you to tell you that your heart is failing. There are some medications and implantable electrical devices such as defibrillators available to help your heart work better for now, but over time your heart will continue to get worse until it can no longer pump blood.
How important to you is physician competence in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion in this scenario?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Case #5 Continued...
Because of the number of medications and devices used when treating heart failure, you will need to see a doctor on a regular basis for the rest of your life.

How important to you is physician competence when choosing a doctor that will provide your long-term management?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

How important to you is physician compassion when choosing a doctor that will provide your long-term management?
☐ Unimportant ☐ Slightly Important ☐ Important ☐ Very important ☐ Essential

If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion when choosing the doctor that will provide your long-term management, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?
☐ Yes ☐ No
**Case #6**

Over the past few months your 12 year old daughter has been experiencing occasional stomach pain and diarrhea and has started to lose weight. You take your daughter to the emergency room and are told that there is a small amount of blood in her stool. It is recommended that you admit your daughter to the hospital overnight so that she can undergo a procedure during which a doctor will guide a camera through the rectum and into the intestine to look for potential tumor. This is a common procedure, but your daughter will need to be put to sleep under anesthesia for its duration and there are several risks associated with it.

**As a parent, how important to you is physician competence during this procedure?**
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Essential

**As a parent, how important to you is physician compassion during this procedure?**
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Essential

**If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)**

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**Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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**Case #7**

For the last 2 weeks your 4 year old daughter has been bruising easily. She had a prolonged nose bleed yesterday and now looks pale and irritable. You take your daughter to the emergency room and are told that she has abnormal blood counts and the emergency room doctors suspect she has leukemia. It is recommended that you admit your daughter to the hospital overnight so that she can undergo further testing including a bone marrow biopsy and a thorough evaluation by the pediatric oncology team to look for leukemia.

**As a parent, how important to you is physician competence in the evaluation of this patient?**
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Essential

**As a parent, how important to you is physician compassion in discussing management considerations?**
If you had to choose between physician competence or physician compassion in this scenario, which would you choose and why? (1-2 sentences)

Do you have a strong personal connection to the diagnosis described in this scenario either through your own experiences, family members, or close friends?
☐ Yes ☐ No

General Information

We thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. We are asking the following questions so that we will be able to better describe those who have participated. Once again, all surveys are anonymous. After answering the following questions please return the completed survey using the enclosed stamped envelope.

Age:

Gender:
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Non-Binary ☐ Other

Ethnicity:
☐ Hispanic or Latino ☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

Race (check all that apply):
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Black or African American ☐ Asian
☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ Other ________________________

Highest Level of Education:
☐ Less than High School Diploma ☐ High School Diploma or Equivalent ☐ Some College
☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Postgraduate Degree ☐ Trade/Technical/Vocational Training

Do you have a career in healthcare? If yes, what is your title (physician, nurse, etc)?
☐ Yes (Title: ________________________) ☐ No

How many children do you have?
☐ 0      ☐ 1      ☐ 2-3      ☐ 4-5      ☐ More than 5

**Annual Income Level:**
☐ Less than $25,000  ☐ $25,000-$50,000  ☐ $50,000-$75,000  ☐ $75,000-$100,000  ☐ More than $100,000

**Health Status:**
☐ Excellent  ☐ Very Good  ☐ Good  ☐ Fair  ☐ Poor

**How many times do you see a physician for primary or specialty care each year?**
☐ 0-1 time  ☐ 2-5 times  ☐ More than 5 times

**How often have you been hospitalized in the past 2 years?**
☐ None  ☐ Once  ☐ 2-5 times  ☐ More than 5 times