



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2010

Community Health Champions Named *Recognition for Exceptional Contributions to Health of Coloradans*

DENVER— Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN), the association of Colorado Community Health Centers (CHCs), announced its Community Health Champions last night at its annual legislative gathering.

The Community Health Champion award recognizes state legislators, reporters, and volunteer clinicians for their work to improve the health of Coloradans. The 2010 awardees are:

Rep. John Kefalas
House District 52, Fort Collins

Sen. Rollie Heath
Senate District 18, Boulder

Dr. Thomas Billroth Gottlieb
Volunteer Clinician for Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN), Aurora

Loretta Sword, *The Pueblo Chieftain*

Community Health Champion Legislators

The Community Health Champion award for legislators is given to lawmakers who have gone above and beyond to support legislation and positions that directly support Community Health Centers and increase access to primary health care for the underserved.

Rep. Kefalas has been a strong supporter of Community Health Centers since his first day in office. His passion to ensure the most vulnerable populations have access to quality health care continues to grow each year. Rep. Kefalas shows great concern for how bills will affect Community Health Centers and their ability to provide direct services.

Recently, Rep. Kefalas' dedication to access to health care has been demonstrated through his sponsoring of legislation including:

- Evaluating the value of a single payer system for Colorado, and
- In 2010, making insurance policies easier to read, and the benefits more understandable for consumers prior to purchasing the policy.

Rep. Kefalas has visited his local Community Health Center, Salud Family Health Centers, on a number of occasions. In November 2009, he took the time to shadow staff at the Salud clinic in Fort Collins to better understand the demands on the clinic and providers, as well as gain understanding of how Salud supports and coordinates patient care.

After Rep. Kefalas' visit, Dr. Laurie Miller, center director of Ft. Collins Salud, commented, "While shadowing the Fort Collins clinic, Representative Kefalas showed deep concern for our patient's care and expressed admiration for the work Salud does every day to provide access to vulnerable populations."

Sen. Heath has been a strong supporter of Community Health Centers. He has been a long-term supporter of his local CHC, Clinica Family Health Services, Inc., that dates back to before he became a senator. Since

becoming a legislator, Sen. Heath has demonstrated his support of CHCs in a number of ways, including voting in favor of legislation that positively impacts the people cared for at CHCs. This legislation included:

- Assessing a fee on hospitals which, when matched with federal funding, expands state health coverage to more than 100,000 uninsured Coloradans through Medicaid and the Children's Basic Health Plan, known as CHP+,
- Strengthening the state's student loan-forgiveness program for health care providers in underserved areas,
- Expanding breast and cervical cancer treatment services through Medicaid for low-income women by adding a \$25 surcharge on breast cancer awareness license plates, and
- Providing benefits under Medicaid and CHP+ to pregnant women and children who are legal immigrants prior to the five-year waiting period following their date of entry in to the United States.
- Today, Sen. Heath is serving as the Senate sponsor of a resolution on Community Health Centers, a bill proposed by Rep. Spencer Swalm (R-Centennial).

Senator Heath believes in access to quality affordable health care. His understanding of the vital nature of the safety net helps ensure that many low-income Coloradans receive the health care services they need.

Community Health Champion Volunteer Clinician

Each year, CCHN recognizes a volunteer clinician who is dedicated to serving the needs of the medically underserved. This unpaid clinician is someone who provides direct patient services in a CHC or to CHC patients in his or her office, leads advocacy activities on behalf of the medically underserved, and has provided volunteer service for a minimum of three years.

Dr. Gottlieb, the 2010 Community Health Champion Volunteer Clinician, has provided countless hours of volunteer services to MCPN over the years, including direct patient services and training in evidence-based cancer care to MCPN's primary care physicians. He is a retired physician specializing in Internal Medicine. He has volunteered countless hours to support MCPN's efforts around cancer care.

- In particular, Dr. Gottlieb helped MCPN secure a three-year grant for the Colorado Generations Cancer Screening Program funded with state tobacco tax monies through the Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease and Chronic Pulmonary Disease Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment Program. This grant has allowed MCPN to provide patients with genetic cancer risk assessment tests.
- Dr. Gottlieb's work and dedication to the Colorado Generations Cancer Screening Program has resulted in thousands of patients throughout Colorado, including hundreds of MCPN patients, deemed at high risk for genetically predisposed cancers to be successfully screened. Where medically indicated, the patients have been tested for genetic predisposition for colorectal, breast and ovarian cancers.
- In addition to his work on the Colorado Generations Cancer Screening Program, Dr. Gottlieb has also been instrumental in the development, management and executive oversight of the Denver Oncology Consortium. The Consortium is a non-profit, volunteer, multi-disciplinary clinical peer review organization. Through the collaborative work of its expert members, Dr. Gottlieb and the Consortium have organized the expert review of cancer diagnosis and treatment of more than 100 cancer cases at MCPN.
- Beyond enabling MCPN patients to continue receiving evidence-based cancer care, Dr. Gottlieb has also been instrumental in finding health care services for many of these patients.

Dr. Gottlieb, through the Colorado Generations Cancer Screening Program and the Consortium, has lead coordinated efforts throughout the community, and within MCPN to improve cancer care and treatment to those in need.

Community Health Champion Media

An integral part of community health is communicating. Information is essential to good health practices and the media plays a critical role in informing the public about health care. Each year CCHN honors a reporter or newspaper, radio or TV station for reporting or otherwise significantly supporting Community Health Centers and the patients they care for. This award honors the recipient for high-profile coverage of issues facing the underserved, coverage of emerging issues in health care for the underserved, and for portraying the human faces of health care issues.

Loretta Sword, a reporter assigned to the health care and religion beats at *The Pueblo Chieftain*, has a rare gift for portraying very complex issues in a humanistic and informative way. Ms. Sword takes the time to consider all angles of a story.

Most recently, she wrote two prominent articles after the grand opening of Pueblo Community Health Center's largest medical clinic. Ms. Sword has written several articles to address the anticipated impact of health care reform on access to health care in the Pueblo area. She writes fair and balanced articles to address the uninsured and portrays Pueblo's health care community—Pueblo Community Health Center, the two local hospitals and the local health department—as a true partnership that people can trust.

In her unique role as reporter for both health care and religion issues, Ms. Sword mastered telling the story last year of why the Health Center needed to start fresh construction on the site where a church had stood since 1902. Such a sensitive subject in a tight-knit community had great potential to stimulate adverse response and publicity, but this never happened because of the writing style that conveyed the sensitivity and rationale of all parties involved. Ms. Sword is well-deserving of this prestigious award.

The staff and members of the Colorado Community Health Network congratulate the 2010 Community Health Champions and thank them for their work to improve the health of people in Colorado.

###

To interview Ms. Kowal, please contact Maureen Maxwell at (303) 861-5165, Ext. 259, cell (303)913-9078, or maureen@cchn.org.

The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is the collective voice for Colorado's 15 Community Health Centers (CHCs) and their patients. CHCs provide a health care home to more than 500,000 of their community members - one in 10 people in Colorado - from 55 of the state's 64 counties. Without CHCs, hundreds of thousands of Colorado's low-income families and individuals would have no regular source of health care. CCHN's mission is to increase access to high quality health care for people in need in Colorado. For more information about CCHN, please visit www.cchn.org.

600 grant street • suite 800 • denver,co 80203 • 303-861-5165 • 303-861-5315 (fax) • www.cchn.org