



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2009

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 legislators, reporters, and volunteer clinicians for their work to improve the health of Coloradans. The 2009 awardees are:

Senator Maryanne “Moe” Keller
Senate District 20, Wheat Ridge

Representative Dianne Primavera
House District 33, Broomfield

Dr. Martin Koschnitzke
Volunteer Clinician for Salud Family Health Centers, Estes Park

Fox Sports Network – Rocky Mountain Region

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.

Sen. Keller has been a strong supporter of Community Health Centers (CHCs). Sen. Keller has demonstrated her leadership for CHCs as a member and the current chair of the Joint Budget Committee (JBC). In her role on the JBC, Sen. Keller has stewarded a number of health care bills important to CHCs through the legislative process, and recruited colleagues to support legislation. This legislation has included:

- Expanding funding for primary care services at CHCs through the Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP),
- Creation of the student loan repayment program (SB07-232) to provide education loan repayments to health professionals who agree to work for at least two years in medically underserved communities,
- Increasing the mental health benefits and eligibility for children and pregnant women in the Children’s Health Plan (CHP+), and
- Simplifying enrollment and re-enrollment in Medicaid and CHP+ through a federal income verification system.

Sen. Keller provides strong visible support of CHCs. Her understanding of health care and the vital nature of the safety net ensures that low-income Coloradans receive the health care services they need.

From the very beginning of her career as a Colorado legislator, Rep. Dianne Primavera has vocally and prominently supported health and safety issues that make life better for Colorado residents. She also has been a strong supporter of the state’s Community Health Centers (CHCs). Just after her first election, she approached her local CHC, Clinica Family Health Services, and offered to sponsor legislation to expand care to underserved populations.

Rep. Primavera serves as a member of the House Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee, and has made extraordinary efforts to steward health care legislation through committees, recruit colleagues to support bills and educate legislators as to the importance of assuring that state residents have access to basic health care. Rep. Primavera has been particularly tireless in championing bills that expand health care for vulnerable populations as well as people living with cancer.

Herself a cancer survivor, Rep. Primavera has sponsored several key pieces of healthcare legislation including:

- Establishment of the Colorado Breast and Women's Reproductive Cancers Fund, with a donation check-off on Colorado income tax forms for the fund to be administered by the Colorado Cancer Coalition,
- Creation of a public awareness program for cervical cancer vaccinations that requires that Medicaid and private health insurance cover the costs of the vaccine – ensuring that underinsured women receive the vaccine, and
- Expanding funding for primary health care services at CHCs through the Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP).

Rep. Primavera continues to work to enhance public safety through prevention efforts and promote access to care by advocating for CHCs.

Volunteer Clinicians: 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/her office, leads advocacy activities on behalf of the medically underserved, and has provided volunteer service for a minimum of three years.

Dr. Koschnitzke is the only practicing OB/GYN in Estes Park. "Dr. K." as he is affectionately called, schedules time each Wednesday morning at the Estes Park Salud Family Health Center to see pregnant patients who require prenatal care. While he is not able to deliver every patient, he delivers the majority of patients' babies.

Dr. Koschnitzke is a wonderful reputation and he is kind and helpful to Salud's patients. When he leaves his private practice to come to Salud on Wednesday mornings, he is losing potential revenue, and yet his commitment to Salud's patients care continues.

Dr. Koschnitzke not only is a hero to Salud and their patients, but the entire Estes Park community.

Media: CCHN honors Community Health Champions among the media. 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 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.

For the past three years, Fox Sports Network-Rocky Mountain Region has partnered with the Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN) to put on MCPN's annual Celebrity Golf Tournament - "Healthcare on the Fairway." Fox Sports Network's coverage of MCPN's events has served as a high profile media display of the work of Community Health Centers (CHCs). Fox Sports Network's coverage has included 300 thirty-second commercial ads commemorating "National Health Center Week" and MCPN's efforts. These publicly broadcast spots have aired to 2.9 million viewers throughout the Rocky Mountain region, including Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, Idaho, South Dakota, Wyoming, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, and New Mexico.

Fox Sports Network's support has given CHCs access to a non-traditional media forum, and has created awareness about CHCs among a broad-based constituency. This awareness has enabled MCPN to develop community partnerships in markets and communities that were previously unthinkable. Through Fox Sport Network's efforts, MCPN has established significant corporate relationships leading to increased revenue to aid patients.

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For contact information for the award winners and digital photos, 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 54 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.

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