

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



September 27, 2010

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION HONORS OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN HEALTH CARE

BRETTON WOODS – The New Hampshire Hospital Association recently honored local leaders in health care. The awards were presented at the association’s 76th Annual Meeting at the Mount Washington Resort Hotel in Bretton Woods.

Carol Themelis, vice president of human resources at Frisbie Memorial Hospital, received the Leslie A. Smith President’s Award, bestowed upon an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the New Hampshire Hospital Association.

Ms. Themelis was recognized for her long service on the board and as the chair of the NHHA Workers Compensation Trust. The trust was organized in 1979 to self-insure workers’ compensation for certain members of the New Hampshire Hospital Association. By 1998, other alternatives were available to members, and the trust’s board members voted to move the trust to run-off status for managing existing claims. At the end of last year, the trust entered into an agreement with a workers compensation company, which assumed all liabilities for future claims. During her tenure as chair over the past ten years, Ms. Themelis worked hard to ensure the affairs of the trust were managed with the utmost care and attention, making the interests of the trust members a priority. The process of transferring the trust’s portfolio to another company was often complex and time-consuming, but her leadership brought that transition to a successful conclusion.

John Mercier, a member of the board of Southern New Hampshire Medical Center, was recognized for his exemplary performance in hospital governance with an Outstanding Trustee of the Year Award.

Mr. Mercier is a 10-year member of his institution’s board of trustees, and served most recently as chair for three years. As chairman, he recognized the changing face of his region, and in response, the hospital increased its translation services to improve communication between medical providers and their patients. The expansion of SNHMC’s cardiology and cancer centers and services was the result of addressing the needs of an aging population. The hospital earned Magnet Designation in recognition of the highest quality of nursing practice and patient care. Mr. Mercier’s understanding of the complexity of the health care system, challenges which hospitals face and forward thinking led to the opening of an immediate care facility, ambulatory surgery access program and new or expanded facilities in surrounding communities. During his tenure as chairman, SNHMC became the first in New Hampshire to initiate safety checklists for certain procedures. He has overseen the decade-long investment in the implementation of integrated information systems.

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From left to right: Doug Dean, President and CEO of Elliot Health System, Jwalant Vadalia, MD recipient of the NHHA Medical Staff Award 2010 and Steve Ahnen, president of NHHA.

Jwalant Vadalia, MD, of Elliot Health System, was presented with the Medical Staff Award for outstanding service to hospital and community. The honor is bestowed upon a medical staff member from an NHHA member institution whose professional performance has strengthened the cooperation between the hospital and the medical staff, and who brings credit to the institution and the community. The award recipient exemplifies the medical staff member who devotes him- or herself to excellence in health care.

Dr. Vadalia was honored for the tremendous work he does to recognize and address mental health care needs in the community he serves. He is credited with working toward a mission of changing the face of geriatric psychiatry in the greater Manchester area. His vision has resulted in thousands of people receiving necessary mental health care and treatment they might have otherwise received. Over the last 16 years, Dr. Vadalia has advocated for program expansion, and he has worked tirelessly to help a relatively new senior health center fulfill its mission to provide comprehensive care. At a time when some hospitals are decreasing their behavioral health services, the geropsychiatric unit at Elliot Hospital has grown in size and service under his direction.

The New Hampshire Hospital Association, a not-for-profit affiliate of the American Hospital Association, serves as a state and federal advocate for hospitals, provides education and information to its members, and informs the public about health care issues. The Association's mission is to provide leadership through advocacy, education and information in support of its member hospitals and health care delivery systems in delivering high quality health care to the patients and communities they serve.

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