



*Connecting Communities Who Care*

# TENNESSEE PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Tennessee Primary Care Association Honors Tennessee's Health Care Leaders with 2008 TPCA Awards of Excellence**

**Franklin, TN**— Representatives from the Tennessee Primary Care Association presented three annual Awards of Excellence to health care leaders last week at their 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference. David McRay, MD, of Jellico, was named Outstanding Practitioner of the Year, Rick Donlon, MD, of Memphis, was awarded the Charles E. Darling Award and Keith Williams, of Nashville, was awarded the Caryl E. Carpenter Award. The Association honored the recipients at a dinner during the conference.

The Outstanding Practitioner Award is given to a clinical practitioner, employed by an organizational member of the association, whose work has demonstrated outstanding leadership, community involvement, and dedication to patient care.

David McRay, MD was presented the Outstanding Practitioner Award for his eighteen years of dedicated service to Dayspring Family Health Center. As a Family Practitioner with extensive obstetric training, David has had over 50,000 encounters since he started in 1989. He has delivered over 1000 babies in the Jellico area.

"David has a unique ability for his patients to quickly accept him into the most intimate moments of life – when his patients are the most vulnerable," said Mark Watt, CEO of Dayspring Family Health Center.

The Charles E. Darling Award recognizes an individual or organization that has exhibited innovation and dedication to the delivery of primary care to vulnerable populations. This award, named in honor of Dr. Charles E. Darling, recognizes outstanding achievement in organizing, delivering, and/or financing health services to vulnerable populations. Dr. Darling dedicated his life to serving the prenatal health needs of women in East Tennessee, regardless of their ability to pay.

Rick Donlon, MD was presented the Charles E. Darling Award for the HIV/AIDS Program he began at Christ Community Health Services. In 2005, Dr. Donlon learned that medical services for the HIV positive population were especially difficult to access because of the highly specialized care they required. After a three-month fellowship in the University of Tennessee's Infectious Disease Program, he returned to the clinic to begin his own HIV/AIDS treatment program. Since it began in 2006, the program has been recognized as a "Center for Excellence" for HIV and AIDS services.

"Dr. Donlon's concern and willingness to initiate these new services has helped much-needed care become available to the HIV positive population in Shelby County, which has the state's highest incidence of this disease," said Nathan Cook, Program Manager for Christ Community Health Services.

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The Caryl E. Carpenter Award recognizes an individual, not employed by a health center, for their support of community health center programs through their participation on the board, as policy makers, or in the community. This award, named in honor of Caryl E. Carpenter, Ph.D., recognizes outstanding achievement in expanding access to primary health care services. Dr. Carpenter administered rural community health centers in East Tennessee and served as the Association's first president, from 1976 to 1978. Her work with state policy makers contributed to the passage of the Primary Care Act of 1980, which improved access to care.

Keith Williams was presented the Caryl E. Carpenter Award because of his leadership in technology for Community Health Centers. He increased membership in the Community Health Network, expanded the services available to the members and added shared purchasing programs for the members. He has recently secured funding for the statewide telehealth network, allowing nonprofit health entities to access specialty services from a distance for their patients.

"This IT expansion project is well underway and has the capacity to connect over 400 health organizations, clinics, and hospitals across the state," said Julia Pearce, Director at Blount Memorial Good Samaritan Clinic. "Keith has profoundly impacted access to health care for Tennessee's medically needy by providing this network."

**More about TPCA**

Tennessee Primary Care Association (TPCA) is a nonprofit corporation connecting Tennesseans with a health care home, especially the medically underserved. Since its inception in 1976, TPCA committed to 1) identifying unmet needs and gaps in service access, 2) developing systems of care, 3) advocating for resources, and 4) promoting awareness of Community Health Centers. Membership includes 34 nonprofit primary care clinics across the state operating over 150 sites providing comprehensive medical care.

[PHOTOS AVAILABLE]

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