Carol Paret, Memorial Hermann’s Community Health ‘Champion’ named Recipient of Texas Health Institute’s Fratis L. Duff Award

Honor recognizes outstanding contributions to public health

Cutline: Memorial Hermann President & CEO Dan Wolterman (L) with Carol Paret, System Senior Vice President and Chief Community Health Officer, at a ceremony celebrating Paret as the 2015 recipient of the Texas Health Institute’s Fratis L. Duff award, for outstanding contributions to public health.

HOUSTON – (September 28, 2015) – For nearly two decades, Carol Paret, Senior Vice President and Chief Community Health Officer for Memorial Hermann Healthcare System and the CEO of Memorial Hermann Community Benefit Corporation (MHCBC), has spent her days behind the scenes, with little fanfare toiling to provide access to health care to people who desperately need it.

Paret’s noble work has not gone unnoticed. She was recently honored as the 2015 recipient of the Texas Health Institute’s Fratis L. Duff award, recognizing Paret’s outstanding contributions to public health. Duff served as Commissioner of the Texas Department of Health from 1975 until his retirement in 1978. The award memorializes Dr. Duff’s long and illustrious career in public health.

Paret, whose Memorial Hermann tenure spans 31 years, began her healthcare career with a community health planning emphasis that has not relented. She is currently serving as past Board Chairman of Gateway to Care, a collaborative involving 165 plus agencies whose mission is to improve access to care for Houston’s uninsured and the Provider Health Network, a project access model for specialty care. She is also chair of THI’s Board of Directors.

“This award is a great honor,” said Paret. “But I could not accomplish anything without my wonderful and hard-working staff, commitment from our Board and leadership as well as the collaboration of some great community partners. Our mission is to help people who otherwise wouldn’t have access to health care, particularly children – the most vulnerable among us. I appreciate THI recognizing me as I know there are others who are working hard in their communities trying to make a difference.”

In a ceremony at a local restaurant, Paret was celebrated by family, leaders from Houston’s public health community such as Stephen Williams, Director of Health and Human Services for the city of Houston, and Memorial Hermann colleagues, including Dan Wolterman, Memorial Hermann President and CEO.

“The great turnout at the event represents the community’s recognition of this humble, quiet visionary's contribution to the underserved,” said Camille D. Miller, President & CEO of THI, a not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization that provides leadership in development of health care solutions to shape the
Texas health care landscape. “Carol’s contributions to public health in the greater Houston community are immeasurable and have touched many lives, in many families.”

In 1995, Paret oversaw the launch of the Memorial Hermann Health Centers for Schools (MHHCS) program, the MHCBC signature program which has grown to 10 school clinics in five Greater Houston school districts – Aldine, Alief, Houston, Lamar Consolidated and Pasadena – and are available to more than 65,000 underserved children at 68 schools.

“Carol is the type of person that you can trust with any project and she will not only execute it, but achieve great results,” said Wolterman. “There is no one who is better suited or more committed to advancing grassroots, community-based health initiatives than Carol Paret. She is a true champion of this cause and deserving of this recognition.”

The MHHCS program has a primary goal: Keep students healthy and in school so they can learn and impact their chance of success. The program accomplishes that goal by providing a medical home for uninsured and underserved students from prekindergarten through 12th grade.

In addition to overseeing MHCBC efforts, Paret, a graduate of the University of Houston, who did her graduate studies at the University of Texas School of Public Health, also is the privacy and security officer managing the medical records function, CME and a large family practice residency program.

“Carol's visionary leadership has been at the forefront of significant and sustainable changes that have benefited the underserved and uninsured in our region,” said Idonia L. Gardner, Executive Director Gateway to Care. “It was Carol’s knowledge and willingness to take risks and think outside the box of how collaborative partners and health systems could meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations that played a pivotal role in the expansion of Federally Qualified Health Centers and clinics in our region. This is an honor well-deserved and long overdue.”

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About Memorial Hermann

An integrated health system, Memorial Hermann is known for world-class clinical expertise, patient-centered care, leading edge technology, and innovation. The system, with its exceptional medical staff and more than 20,000 employees, serves to advance health in Southeast Texas and the Greater Houston community. Memorial Hermann’s 13 hospitals include four hospitals in the Texas Medical Center: an acute care hospital which houses the Texas Trauma Institute and a Level I trauma center of which Life Flight® air ambulance is a part, a hospital for children, a rehabilitation hospital and an orthopedic and spine hospital; eight suburban hospitals; and a second rehabilitation hospital in Katy. The system also operates three Heart & Vascular Institutes, the Mischer Neuroscience Institute, three IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute locations, joint replacement centers, cancer centers, imaging and surgery centers, sports medicine and rehabilitation centers, outpatient laboratories, a chemical dependency treatment center, a home health agency, a retirement community and a nursing home. As an Accountable Care Organization, the system also offers employers health solutions and health benefit plans through its wholly owned Memorial Hermann Health Insurance Company.