

HealthLeaders Media honors winners of Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare awards in Nashville ceremony

By Matt Rogers, for HealthLeaders News, June 14, 2006

HealthLeaders Media honored the finest senior leadership in hospitals, health plans and medical group practices at the 2006 Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare Conference and Awards on June 13 in Nashville, Tenn.

Representatives of the winning organizations discussed their blueprints for success while sharing ideas and methods for overcoming healthcare leadership challenges at a morning roundtable session. Sponsored by Sterling Healthcare and QHR, the event was capped off with a keynote address from Colleen-Conway Welch, dean of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

Ochsner Health System of New Orleans earned the top spot in the Large Hospitals category not just for its dedication and resolve during, and in the wake of, Hurricane Katrina, but also for the strength of its leadership leading up to the defining event. Unlike many other neighboring facilities, Ochsner sits above sea level--which inevitably left the city's overwhelming need for healthcare services on the hospital's shoulders after the flood waters receded. Ochsner successfully handled its role as one of only three operating facilities in the region, and its executive team managed to open an additional clinic to provide care to displaced New Orleans residents. "Our Baton Rouge facility became our lifeline," said President and Chief Operating Officer Warner Thomas, who also showed audience members a video presentation that illustrated the Ochsner staff's dedication during the storm.

Delaware's Beebe Medical Center was honored in the Small Hospitals category for its ability to thrive and grow despite frequent volume swings in its coastal community locale in Lewes. After realizing in the late 1990s that the organization needed to narrow its mission objectives to attainable goals, Beebe's senior leadership team focused on customer service, marketing the hospital as a facility dedicated to individualized care. Patient satisfaction scores have increasingly risen, and the number of staff physicians has grown immensely--figures that President and CEO Jeffrey Fried and Chief Operating Officer Rick Schaffner touted as testament to Beebe's solid leadership. "You can't manage something properly unless you can measure it," Schaffner said.

With fierce in-state competition to contend with, Farmington, Conn.-based HMO ConnectiCare proved worthy of the State and Regional Health Plan award. Senior Vice President of Operations Ida Schnipper traced the organization's ascent from "Good" to "Best in Class," validating ConnectiCare's reputation as one of

America's highest-rated health plans. Vice President of Human Resources Dick Rogers elaborated on the correlation between a company's culture and its identity. "The culture is really what defines you," he said.

Wichita Clinic in Kansas earned top honors in the Medical Group Practices category for its advancements on a \$26 million surgery center, which was not only completed ahead of schedule, but also within budget. The clinic regularly interacted with accounting executives, business associates, architects, contractors and IT representatives to successfully accomplish the organization's objectives. "Having fabulous people is much more important than fabulous facilities," said Executive Director Kimberley T. Shank.

More than 75 hospitals, health plans and medical group practices from across the country submitted entries for the competition. HealthLeaders Media has been honoring healthcare teams for the past three years. Finalists in the Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare 2006 included Christus Health in Dallas, Texas (large hospitals); Lake Hospital System in Painesville, Ohio (large hospitals); Logan Medical Center in Guthrie, Okla. (small hospitals); San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center in Alamosa, Colo. (small hospitals); SCAN Health Plan in Long Beach, Calif. (health plans); Hudson Health Plan in Tarrytown, N.Y. (health plans); Queen City Physicians in Cincinnati, Ohio (medical group practices); and Women's Health Care Group of Pennsylvania in Oaks, Pa. (medical group practices).

Judges for the program included: Rob Stuart, chief operating officer of HCPro Inc.; Matthew Cann, HealthLeaders Media group publisher; Jim Molpus, editor of *HealthLeaders* magazine; Howard Berman, CEO of Excellus BlueCross BlueShield; Gordon R. Clark, President and CEO, The Governance Institute; Jon Lehman, Associate Dean for Healthcare, Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management; Marshall M. Baker, FACMPE, President and CEO, Physician Advisory Services Inc.; Sheri Sellmeyer, Principal Director of Research and Analysis, HealthLeaders-InterStudy; Norman C. Payson, M.D., former Chairman and CEO, Oxford Health Plans Inc.; Laurence P. Harkness, former President and CEO, Children's Medical Center, Dayton, Ohio; Sister Nancy Linenkugel, E.D.M., President, Chatfield College and former CEO of Providence Hospital, Sandusky, Ohio; Jim Stokes, Senior Partner, m21partners and former President of Quorum Health Resources; and Brad Cain, Editor of California Healthfax.