



Foundation for  
Healthy Communities



New Hampshire  
Hospital Association

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**New Hampshire Hospital Association & Foundation for Healthy Communities Honor Providers,  
Executives for Outstanding Service in Healthcare at 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting**

CONCORD, NH – At their Virtual Annual Meeting recently held during October 18 – 27, 2021, the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA) and Foundation for Healthy Communities (FHC) honored healthcare leaders, executives, and partners from across the state who have made significant contributions to their hospital or the healthcare field. The organizations presented a total of seven awards that recognize the efforts of individuals and organizations in the areas of patient safety and quality of care, innovation, and leadership, especially during the unprecedented challenges facing hospitals and health systems due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“COVID-19 has tested the resiliency of our hospitals and health systems during this public health crisis, yet they have demonstrated that they are in fact the epitome of strength and resiliency as they continue to respond to the pandemic,” stated Steve Ahnen, president of the New Hampshire Hospital Association. “It is our privilege to recognize the ongoing efforts and leadership of individuals, hospitals, and health systems across the state as they support their patients and organizations through these unprecedented times.”

Below is a list of the recipients for the 2021 NHHA & FHC Awards of Excellence:

**Kathy Bizarro-Thunberg, Executive Vice President of the New Hampshire Hospital Association**, was recognized with the *Leslie A. Smith President’s Award*, bestowed upon an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the New Hampshire Hospital Association, and in recognition of their dedicated service to the affairs, management and growth of the Association and its affiliates. Bizarro-Thunberg was recognized for her leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as her dedication and commitment demonstrated through her distinguished career of nearly 35 years at the Association supporting the efforts of hospitals and health systems across the state.

**Katherine Hanna** of Shaheen Phinney was also recognized with the *Leslie A. Smith President's Award* for her work with health care providers for nearly four decades, as well as her contributions to the Foundation for Healthy Communities Health Care Decisions Coalition, having been involved since its inception in 1998. This past year, Hanna's efforts during the 2021 Legislative Session on SB 74 relative to advance directives for health care decisions were instrumental in getting the bill passed with new language that better supports patients, in large part due to her insight and efforts to get parties to compromise and understand the importance of the necessary changes.

**Michael Calderwood, MD, MPH, Chief Quality Officer, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center**, was the recipient of the *Medical Staff Award* for outstanding service to his hospital and community, an honor bestowed upon a medical staff member whose professional performance has strengthened the cooperation between the hospital and the medical staff and who brings credit to the institution and the community. Revered by his colleagues for his devotion to delivering compassionate, quality patient care, Dr. Calderwood was nominated for his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic within his institution and the twin state region. He has been at the forefront of all policy development, educational efforts and is considered an expert in all things Covid at the state level in both NH and VT and is consulted regularly by regulators and clinicians for his expert guidance.

**Gregg Tewksbury of Keene** who sits on the Board of Trustees at Cheshire Medical Center was recognized for excellence in hospital governance with the *Outstanding Trustee of the Year Award*. Tewksbury was recognized for his passion, vision, and strategic governance as a Board Trustee, as well as his commitment to, and passion for, the organization, its staff, and its patients throughout his years of service.

**Speare Memorial Hospital** was named the recipient of the *Noah Lord for Patient & Family Engagement Award* which recognizes the innovative work being done to better engage patients and families with Patient Family Advisors and Patient Family Advisory Councils to improve patient safety, quality of care and the patient experience in a hospital system. Speare Memorial was recognized for their efforts to reduce hospital readmissions for high-risk patients by implementing call-backs conducted by their Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) to identify and manage their physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs after discharge.

**Elliot Hospital**, a member of SolutionHealth, was recognized with the *Honoring Excellence in Patient Safety & Quality Improvement Award* which honors a team of healthcare professionals who demonstrate a continued commitment to providing quality care to their patients, leading the charge for quality improvement, promoting transparency to improve healthcare, and achieving better outcomes through the implementation of a strong culture of safety. Elliot Hospital was recognized for reaching a significant milestone of 5 years without a central line-

associated blood stream infection (CLABSI) in the Intensive Care Unit, which is a testament to the vigor and engagement of all team members during a public health crisis, and their sustained vigilance to patient safety during every single patient encounter.

Recognized with the *Clint Jones Nursing Award* was **Irene Jimenez of Southern New Hampshire Medical Center**, a member of SolutionHealth, for demonstrating significant growth within both her nursing skills and leadership role at the hospital, exemplifying the attributes of leadership in collaborative practice and nursing excellence at its best, and continuing to make significant improvements in the delivery of care for the hospital and its patients.

And honored with the Foundation's highest recognition was **Philip Lawson, MD**, a practicing physician with **Littleton Regional Healthcare** and the leading resource for palliative care and medical ethics guidance in the North Country, who received the prestigious *Innovator's Award* for his leadership in the development of the changes recently adapted by the legislature relative to SB 74. Championing the revisions to Advance Directives laws, Lawson was the prime author of the amendment and his contributions resulted in changes that will make it easier for patients and providers to honor the patient's preferences regarding end of life care without unnecessary barriers.

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