

Georgia Public Health Association Honors Clayton with Al Dohany Award



From left: Southern Regional President and CEO Jim Crissey, Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioner Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D., Clayton County District Health Director Alpha Fowler Bryan, M.D., Clayton Archway Professional Gail Webb, and GPHA President Regina Abbott, MPA.

Wednesday, May 01, 2013

Jonesboro – The Clayton County Archway Partnership was honored Tuesday with the Georgia Public Health Association’s (GPHA’s) highest award for health-related community service. The Al Dohany Award for Community Service was given to the Archway Partnership for helping designate Clayton County as a federal Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) and for establishing a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in September of last year.

The Al Dohany Award, established in 1999, honors public health leader Al Dohany, who made great contributions to local public health

promotion through work with families and community groups. The award is presented annually to an individual or group that has made a positive contribution to community health through collaboration with the community and its leaders.

Clayton County District Health Director Alpha Fowler Bryan, M.D., Southern Regional Medical Center President and CEO Jim Crissey, and Clayton County Archway Professional Gail Webb—who led the Archway Partnership’s local efforts—accepted the award on April 23, 2013 during the 84th Annual Meeting and Conference of the Georgia Public Health Association at the Grand Hyatt Atlanta hotel in Buckhead.

“We are ecstatic that the GPHA decided to recognize our efforts,” said Bryan. “It took enormous dedication and tenacity to achieve a HPSA designation and establish a federally qualified healthcare center. We know it is desperately needed in the county since many people avoid medical treatment or put stress on local emergency rooms due to lack of health insurance and the fear of being turned away at a primary care facility. The presence of a federally-qualified health center will allow us to break down barriers to preventive and primary care.”

HPSA designation, achieved by the county last June, greatly increases the county’s eligibility for health-related federal aid and provides incentives for talented medical professionals willing to work in the county and help meet the healthcare provider shortage. The Lovejoy Medical Center, located at 2201 Talmadge Road in Lovejoy, Ga., addresses economic and healthcare disparities by offering primary care services to residents, regardless of their level of insurance coverage or ability to pay.

“Establishing the FQHC was a significant accomplishment because the clinic will offer underinsured and uninsured residents in Clayton and other counties access to high quality and affordable healthcare,” said Webb. “The clinic will also eventually include dental services, which are desperately needed in every community. The award sends a strong message that the leaders and citizens of Clayton County can work together in a nonpartisan way to positively affect public health issues in their community.”

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As the only hospital in the county, Southern Regional provides over \$82 million per year in free care, according to Crissey. He said that the FQHC established by the Archway Partnership will provide primary level healthcare to people who would otherwise not have access to care.

“Having an alternative venue for the community to receive care, even if on a sliding fee scale, is critical as it relieves the pressure on an emergency room seeing over 80,000 visits per year,” said Crissey. “Our emergency department was designed to see between 50,000 and 55,000 patients per year. It feels great knowing that the Archway Partnership was able to collaborate with the community to enhance access to affordable healthcare.

“We could not have achieved this without the support of the University of Georgia Archway Partnership and the graduate level resources it took to manage and interpret the data needed to meet all of the federal requirements,” Crissey added.

The Archway Partnership, a forward-thinking initiative established by the University of Georgia, connects counties facing infrastructure and economic development challenges to the knowledge, expertise, and resources of the University System of Georgia. The Clayton County Archway Partnership, established in 2008, represents Archway’s first and only partnership in metropolitan Atlanta. The Clayton County Archway Partnership Executive Committee is comprised of various change agents and leaders within Clayton County who shepherd policy, system, and environmental changes in the county. The committee membership includes the chair of the Clayton County Board of Commissioners, the Clayton County District Health Director, the president of Clayton State University, the president of the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce, the president and CEO of Southern Regional Medical Center, and five city mayors.

For more information about the AI Dohany Award for Community Service, visit <http://www.gapha.org/gpha-awards-and-nomination-forms/>.



Clayton County District Health Director Alpha Fowler Bryan, MD (left) speaks during the Awards Luncheon of the 84th Annual Meeting and Conference of the Georgia Public Health Association.

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About the Clayton County Board of Health – The Clayton County Board of Health (CCBOH), located at 1117 Battle Creek Road in Jonesboro, seeks “A Healthier Clayton in One Generation.” Its mission is to improve the overall health and safety of the community through health promotion, prevention, protection, and preparedness planning activities that are evidence-based and data-driven. The Clayton County Board of Health offers comprehensive health services, health education, and outreach programs to address a wide variety of community health issues, including infant mortality, child and youth development, obesity, sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), food safety, unintentional injuries, infectious diseases, and emergency preparedness.

About Southern Regional Medical Center - Southern Regional Medical Center (SRMC) is a full-service, 331-bed hospital in Riverdale, Ga. managed by Emory Healthcare. The hospital has proudly served the healthcare needs of its neighbors for more than 40 years. As a not-for-profit organization, SRMC is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the surrounding community by blending a passion for healing with the use of advanced medical technology to deliver the best possible care to patients. SRMC was the first to offer angioplasty and round-the-clock catheterization on the south side of Atlanta and is recognized as an accredited Chest Pain Center. In addition, SRMC boasts an Advanced Primary Stroke Center, the Georgia Orthopedic Institute, minimally-invasive, robotic surgeries with the da Vinci Surgical System® and a variety of rehabilitation services.

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