Allegiance Health in Michigan Receives Prestigious $100,000 Foster G. McGaw Prize for Excellence in Community Service

Baxter

CHICAGO, Ill. - January 13, 2011 - In honor of its broad-based efforts to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of its community, Allegiance Health in Jackson, Mich., is the recipient of the 2010 Foster G. McGaw Prize for Excellence in Community Service, one of the most esteemed community service honors in healthcare.

Each year, this $100,000 prize is presented to a healthcare organization that provides innovative programs that significantly improve the health and well-being of its community. The Foster G. McGaw Prize is sponsored by The Baxter International Foundation, the American Hospital Association (AHA) and Health Research & Educational Trust.

Named as finalists for this year's award and receiving $10,000 each are Augusta Health in Fishersville, Va., Palmetto Health in Columbia, S.C., and Wrangell Medical Center in Wrangell, Alaska.

"This year's McGaw Prize winner, Allegiance Health, is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the people in its community. With a department and board committee solely dedicated to prevention and community health, Allegiance offers community programs that increase access to care and empower individuals to improve their health," said John O'Brien, chair of the Foster G. McGaw Prize Committee. "The system's initiatives focus on good health from birth to adulthood, including a prenatal task force, school-based health centers and a work site wellness program. Through such efforts, and in collaboration with other community entities, Allegiance Health demonstrates its commitment to elevating both physical and mental health throughout its region."

Allegiance Health is a community-owned, locally governed, integrated health system that includes more than 40 sites of care, including both short-term and long-term acute care hospitals, a network of primary care clinics and diagnostic centers, home care and hospice services, a diabetes center and a wound care center. Allegiance Health originally opened its doors in 1918 as Foote Hospital, and now provides healthcare to 500,000 people in a nine-county area of south central Michigan. It is the largest employer in the region with 3,700 employees. The organization's vision is to create Michigan's healthiest community through exceptional healthcare and by inspiring a passion for wellness through community collaborations that elevate community health in the region.

"Receiving this award is especially meaningful because it reflects a two decade journey to act on our mission for the benefit of our community," said Georgia

Fojtasek, president and CEO of Allegiance Health. "We have worked to promote health and wellness and ensure access to the underserved. By partnering with community organizations that share our passion and vision for making Jackson the state's healthiest community, we have begun to positively change behaviors. Our community partnerships have created new access points to care and innovative approaches to health and wellness that are clearly making a lasting impact far beyond the walls of our facilities."
Among other programs, Allegiance Health was recognized for the following innovative community service initiatives:

- **It's Your Life** - Developed in partnership with several employers throughout the region, this community-wide health management program encourages employers to become partners in managing employee health, drives personal accountability of employees for their own health, offers customized interventions to employers based on risk assessments of their employees and reduces healthcare costs. Since its launch in 2002, the program has helped participants decrease their average number of health risks by nearly 25 percent.
- **Project Access** - Since 2007, this program has worked to provide access to healthcare for the working poor in the region surrounding Allegiance Health. In partnership with several community health organizations and foundations, as well as 44 primary-care physicians and 125 specialists, Project Access has served more than 875 people who are without health insurance.
- **School-based health centers** - In collaboration with Jackson Public Schools, the Jackson County Health Department and local parents, Allegiance Health supports two school-based health centers which provide in-classroom health education, primary care through a nurse practitioner and dental and counseling services to children who live in Jackson County. In 2009, the centers saw a combined 4,409 students.
- **Community Medication Assistance Program (CMAP)** - Since the program's inception in 2000, CMAP has filled more than 200,000 prescriptions and provided $15 million in free drugs to community members without prescription insurance.
- **House-to-House** - This prenatal education program, which has served more than 900 women since 2003, focuses on low-income women and trains recognized "natural helpers" in the community to host gatherings focused on women's health before, during and after pregnancy, prenatal care and teen motherhood.

"The Foster G. McGaw Prize recognizes healthcare organizations that serve as role models for improving the health and well-being of the people in their communities. This year's winner and finalists exemplify the elements and initiatives needed to address important community health issues," said O'Brien. "Through involved leadership, dedicated staff and community collaboration, they improve the lives of the residents they serve."

2010 Finalists
Three Foster G. McGaw Prize finalists were also recognized for their significant

accomplishments in community service. Each received a $10,000 prize:

- **Augusta Health** in Fishersville, Va., for innovative leadership in developing a community health forum with more than 60 local agencies and organizations, dedicated to solving key community problems, including the creation of a 24-hour health information and referral call center and an initiative to encourage flu vaccinations.
- **Palmetto Health** in Columbia, S.C., for establishing programs and services to reduce health disparities through increased healthcare access and education including a parent-to-parent asthma support group and a school-based teen health initiative.
- **Wrangell Medical Center** in Wrangell, Alaska, for successful efforts to enhance quality of life for a remote island community that the organization serves through a variety of programs, including a rural health careers training initiative and a program that cultivates leadership and civic engagement among community youth.

Allegiance Health is a $419 million, 480-bed health system based in Jackson, Michigan. Inspired by a mission "to lead our community to better health and well-being at every stage of life," Allegiance Health complements its traditional acute care services with mission-based programs that complete the care continuum for all members of the community. Allegiance has elected to partner with like-minded organizations to create services that reach people with the most need. In addition to offering comprehensive primary and acute care, Allegiance Health demonstrates its dedication to serious community needs by offering substance abuse and behavioral health services, a comprehensive diabetes center, wellness and prevention programs and a unique partnership with the community's Federally Qualified Health Center. Allegiance Health's commitment to patient-centered care throughout the care continuum can be seen in its long-term acute care service, its hospice home and its orthopedic and neuroscience specialty center - a collaboration among all providers of spine, brain, joint and muscle care.

The Foster G. McGaw Prize, celebrating more than 25 years of honoring excellence in community service, recognizes healthcare organizations that demonstrate commitment to community service through a range of programs that demonstrate a passion and continuous commitment to making communities healthier and more vital. The prize, first awarded in 1986, inspires hospitals, health systems and communities to assess and implement programs that improve their communities. For more information, visit www.aha.org/foster [1].

The American Hospital Association is a not-for-profit association of healthcare provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include almost 5,000 hospitals, healthcare systems, networks, other providers of care and 37,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for healthcare leaders and is a source of information on healthcare issues and trends. For more information, visit the AHA Web site at www.aha.org [2].

The Baxter International Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Baxter International Inc. (NYSE:BAX), helps organizations expand access to healthcare in the United States and around the world. The foundation, established in 1981, began to focus exclusively on increasing access to healthcare in 2002 - particularly for the disadvantaged and underserved - in communities where Baxter employees live and work. Baxter International Inc., through its subsidiaries, develops, manufactures and markets products that save and sustain the lives of people with hemophilia, immune disorders, infectious diseases, kidney disease, trauma, and other chronic and acute medical conditions. As a global, diversified healthcare company, Baxter applies a unique combination of expertise in medical devices, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology to create products that advance patient care worldwide. For more information, please visit www.baxter.com [3].

Founded in 1944, the **Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET)** is a private, not-for-profit organization involved in research, education, and demonstration programs addressing health management and policy issues. An affiliate of the American Hospital Association, HRET collaborates with healthcare, government, academic, business, and community organizations across the United States to conduct research and disseminate findings that shape the future of healthcare. For more information about HRET, visit www.hret.org [4].

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[1] http://www.aha.org/foster
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