Award

Merle McPherson Leadership Award

Description

In 2008, this award was developed to honor Dr. Merle McPherson. Dr. McPherson retired from MCHB in January 2007. She left a legacy of leadership and vision for how to create a new model of family-centered health care delivery for children and youth with special health care needs. She also led the way to expand the family-centered care model for children with special health care needs internationally.

Dr. McPherson received her medical degree from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, and a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Preventive Medicine, an honorary fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and served as director of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs from 1987-2006. In honor of Dr. McPherson, this award continues to recognize exemplary contributions to further family/professional collaboration within the state Title V Programs and AMCHP.

Criteria

Nominees for the Merle McPherson Leadership Award must meet the following criteria:

- Candidate is a family representative or family professional[1].
- Candidate's work with AMCHP and the state Title V program has resulted in changes in policy and procedures related to partnerships with families or family organizations.
- Candidate has actively contributed to AMCHP's and the Title V organization's efforts to advance the inclusion of families and increase family involvement at all levels.
- Candidate must submit a letter of support delineating contributions to Title V from the state Title V MCH/CYSHCN program if s/he is not the Title V, MCH, or CYSHCN Director.
- Candidate does not have to be an AMCHP member.

[1]*A family representative or family professional is a family member, and includes the broad definition of parents, youth, and/or extended family, who are immediately involved in the day-to-day life of the family, which participates in a voluntary, advisory or paid capacity within a Title V (MCH or CYSHCN) program.*

Selection Process

One award will be made annually from a pool of nominations solicited nationwide. AMCHP will issue a call for award nominations via AMCHP Pulse, Member Briefs, the AMCHP website, and blast emails to all AMCHP contacts approximately six months prior to the Annual Conference. Nominations will close and all materials must be submitted approximately five months prior to the Annual Conference. The Family LEAD Committee will conduct the initial vetting of all nominations and submit a single recommended candidate to the Governance Committee. The Family LEAD Committee will only review materials submitted in the application and will not be able to conduct their own research of the nominee's background and bring in a reviewer's outside knowledge of the candidate's qualifications. All materials should be complete and provide a summary of the candidate's qualifications. Three pages of additional material may be submitted in addition to the nomination form and the letter of support if required. Materials should demonstrate how the individual has significantly contributed to increasing family involvement in a state MCH/CYSHCN program and AMCHP. Materials should also show how the individual encouraged procedure or policy change to promote greater family involvement within their state Title V Program and AMCHP. The Governance Committee reviews and approves the final recommendation for consideration by the Board of Directors. Nominees are notified of the final status of their submission approximately three months prior to the Annual Conference. The Merle McPherson Award is awarded during the AMCHP Annual Conference. This award may not be awarded annually.

Special Travel Funding

The awardee will receive full conference registration (in-person). If the awardee's agency will not cover travel to attend the AMCHP Conference and accept the award in person, AMCHP may, if funding is available, provide reimbursement for any of the following items:

- Round-trip travel expenses, including hotel stays and ground transportation
- Incidental expenses in accordance with AMCHP's Travel Reimbursement Policy

Awardees will be notified of the availability of travel funding at the time of notification of the award.

Prior Awardees

2026 Eileen Auer Bennett
2025 Timothy Markle, MC, MCS
2024 Tricia Brisbine, Minnesota
2023 Gina Pola-Money, Utah
2022 Rebecca (Becky) Burns, MSSW, Wisconsin
2021 Angela Miney, Florida
2020 Deepa Srinivasavaradan, New Jersey
2019 Dana Yarbrough, Virginia
2018 Donene Feist, North Dakota
2017 Rylin Rogers, Indiana
2016 Laura Warren, Texas
2015 Nora Wells, New Mexico
2014 Josie Thomas, Maryland
2013 Anna Cyr, Maine
2012 Rodney Farley, Arkansas
2011 All Family Leaders
2010 Susan Colburn, Alabama
2009 Ruth Walden, New York
2008 Robert Cook, Illinois