

## **AMCHP 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:**

#### **Opening Plenary:**

#### **A Vision for a Compassionate and Affordable Health System**

March 1st to 5th, 2008

NAN STREETER: I have to say that the sign of a true leader great leader is one who hires wonderful staff. And so obviously Peter has hired wonderful staff. We've worked with many of them and really recognize their talents. So good job, Peter.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Including you.

NAN STREETER: Including me, all right. Okay. Thank you.

I have to say, too, Peter has been known for his jokes and for his cartoons. That didn't start when he came to the federal government. I mean he did this in Utah all the time. So, unfortunately, I've seen some of those many times. What I'd like to do now is to present the AMCHP Presidential Award. This award was established over the past several years to recognize a distinguished member or partner who has contributed time, talent, treasure to the organization and has been a resource to AMCHP leaders nationwide.

This award isn't necessarily given annually. It's made at the discretion of the AMCHP president. And I thought long and hard about whether we were going to do a presidential award this year. There have been so many individuals, so many leaders involved in seeing AMCHP through its transition, through its moving ahead and past times and helping us regain our foot as a national leader for MCH programs.

But there's one individual who has really made a difference for AMCHP. And when he has talked a little bit about the possibility of retiring soon, I thought it would be important to honor his contributions to AMCHP now rather than waiting until he does retire.

And perhaps we can keep him working with AMCHP even longer. I would like to honor Dr. William Hollingshead.

So before I turn the podium over to Bill, I want to talk a little bit about Bill's contributions for AMCHP. Bill is also a past president for AMCHP, and he's been a leader for as long as I can remember, going to committee meetings and so on and so forth.

And this past couple of years Bill has served as the co-chair of the emerging issues committee, and that's been challenging even of itself in terms of defining what is an emerging issue. It's not as simple as it sounds.

Bill has always looked out for the interests of AMCHP and I can't tell you how many times Bill has said to me: If there's anything I can do, call on me; I'm there for AMCHP.

And I have to say, too, that when Bill and I were talking yesterday, he says, well, I'm stepping down as the co-chair of the emerging issues committee; I would be interested in doing this for AMCHP. So he's always there for us.

Bill has been a leader in Rhode Island. I've been long envious of the programs that Bill has established in his home state. He's a wise counselor, a witty debater, and he's always thinking about how to position MCH in the best way possible.

Bill is a sage elder, said with great respect, of our organization. Please join me in recognizing Bill and all that he has done for us as well as all the things that he has done for mothers and children, both in Rhode Island and nationally.

And to recognize him for the leader that he is.

WILLIAM HOLLINGSHEAD: Like Dr. Van Dyck, I can only say how valuable and how valued it is to be recognized with people whom I've been working with for a very long time. I too was at one of the AMCHP meetings when Dr. Van Dyck was our president, and as I recollect our response to the advent of Ronald Reagan's

Block Grant was to ditch the entire agenda for that AMCHP meeting, convene around the pool and try to figure out what we were going to do with the Block Grant.

Now, Michael will be comforted I'm not necessarily suggesting that we ditch the entire agenda for the next couple of days. But AMCHP has been agile and responsive and creative in the most adverse times and Horace was right that does sometimes bring out the best in us all.

Like Peter, what has happened in Rhode Island is really a credit to the wonderful folks who have joined in leadership in that small but lively place. And I would be remiss in not recognizing those who are here. Becca (inaudible) and Deb Garnow and Peter Simon, and especially our parent consultants. As many you know, we have tried over many years to explore and build parent roles in the development and the monitoring and the expansion and the quality assurance of maternal and child health and working for and with parents has proven to be in many ways the most rewarding and I think ultimately the most productive channel to take. So thank you very much.