

## **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: We gave Bill a crystal ice bucket, and when I was trying to decide what would be an appropriate award, I remember -- I'm going to tell on you Bill, I remember the picture of your grandson drinking wine at a very early age.

So I couldn't resist. I thought it was very appropriate.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

NAN STREETER: There you go. Living awards is a wonderful way to recognize the great work of colleagues, key role of leaders in our field and the dedication of AMCHP's members and partners. To that end, I'm extremely pleased to announce that AMCHP has created an award to honor the work of individuals who are making a difference in the

area of family involvement and support for children and youth and young adults with special healthcare needs.

This award is named in honor of Merle McPherson, who has worked tirelessly for families, for children for youth, for young adults with special healthcare needs.

And Dr. McPherson is here with us today and we'll invite her up to the podium in a minute to make a few remarks. This award recognizes the outstanding -- an outstanding individual who has championed family involvement in Title V programs.

I would like to ask for a moment of silence. A year ago today, in the middle of one of our board meetings, Ruth Walden received a call that her daughter had died. And so I'd like to take a moment to recognize the significance of today for Ruth and for all of us who are parents.

(Moment of silence)

Here to present the award to the first-ever recipient of the Merle McPherson award I'd like to invite Merle up to maybe say a few words about the Merle McPherson Award. And then we'll present the award.

MERLE McPHERSON: Good morning. As most of you know, I'm now retired, but I will tell you, it is great to be back. And I want to talk a little bit about the award and why it's so important to me and so wonderful.

I came into the federal government in the late '70s, knowing that the challenge of changing Title V's Crippled Children's Program was something that we needed to deal with. And that we really -- it had been a wonderful program. It was out of date. It needed revision. And I think it's terribly important that we understand that we have succeeded in doing that, with the strong leadership and support of families.

The Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, the Association of Maternal and Child Health programs, each and every state Title V director and, in fact, all of you, who are part of the MCH family and have benefited from our grants and training and research and demonstration and service programs have played a part in replacing what was a medical model that was a program that diagnosed and treated a disease or a crippling defect into

the new model which is the family-centered care model, which is the new standard of care in this country.

It is for all children. And it is based on the understanding and the science that children are served within the context of their families and within the communities in which they live.

Family-centered care is based, as we know, on family professional partnerships. And as I say, it is the standard of care. The Title V legislation, as we all know, has been changed. We no longer talk about diagnosing treating crippled children, but we talk about requiring Title V to facility the development of community systems of care that are family-centered, culturally competent and coordinated.

And I think it's terribly important to recognize at this point in time that there is partial implementation of that legislation in every state. And I think the push for full funding for Title V will move that along.

So that there is absolutely nothing that could please and honor me more than this award that celebrates that family professional partnership. And which will annually recognize a

family or professional leader who continues to build those partnerships as we move to fulfilling our legislative agenda.

So I say congratulations to the first awardee. I look forward to your remarks and I thank all of you so very, very much. Thank you.