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UP Health Access Coalition Honors 6 'Hero for the Uninsured' Awardees

Six exemplary health service providers and volunteers from across Upper Michigan were honored May 19 for their contributions in assisting uninsured Upper Peninsula residents to gain access to care. They received their 2011 **"Hero for the Uninsured" Awards** at the 4th annual recognition dinner in Marquette, sponsored by the Upper Peninsula Health Access Coalition in cooperation with local access coalitions and hospitals from across the U.P. The evening's speaker was Thomas F. Noren, MD, chief medical officer of Marquette General Health System.

"The recipients of the **Dr. Richard Imm Memorial 'Hero' Award** and five other **'Hero for the Uninsured' Awards** represent hundreds of others who partner with local access coalitions of the U.P. to selflessly respond to needs of families, friends and neighbors without health care coverage," said Bill Reid, UPHAC board president.

This year's **"Hero for the Uninsured" Awardees** are:

- * **Laurence J.P. Ziomkowski II of Marquette**, who received the first *Imm Memorial "Hero" Award* for his dedicated service and commitment to the work of Medical Care Access Coalition (MCAC) of Marquette, the regional board of UPHAC and the cause of increasing access to health care – especially mental health services – to uninsured U.P. residents, regardless of their ability to pay.

- * **Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital of Laurium** as a *"Most Valuable Partner"* in serving the medical care needs of uninsured residents of the Keweenaw Peninsula in cooperation with the Western U.P. Healthcare Access Coalition (WUPHAC).



For information on our regional partners, please go to www.uphealthaccess.org

* **Donald Fahrbach, MD, of Munising**, recognized as a *“Personal Touch” Hero* for his long-standing commitment to providing care to patients in his community regardless of their ability to pay and his support as a care provider for patients of MCAC - Alger County.

* **The Garrett Eye & Laser Center of Escanaba and Iron Mountain**, honored as an *“Innovation Hero”* for donating approximately \$135,000 in cataract surgeries and related care annually to U.P. residents without resources or coverage for these vision care procedures.

* **Alice Halsey of Pickford**, who turned her professional role as a health care educator at Lake Superior State University into personal volunteer leadership and advocacy for uninsured residents of her community to access health care services. A founding board member of Community Health Access Coalition (CHAC), she is being recognized as an *“Above & Beyond” Hero* awardee.

* **Daniel M. Mitchell, MD, of Iron Mountain**, honored as a *“Most Valuable Partner”* for his role as a compassionate and committed health care provider, donating some \$20,000 in services for uninsured enrollees of the Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition (DIMCAC) program since its inception in 2004.

A total of 13 individuals, community programs and health care organizations nominated for 2011 **“Hero for the Uninsured” Awards** were acknowledged during the May 19 recognition dinner at UpFront & Company.

The other nominees recognized at this year’s dinner were:

- Chippewa County Health Access Coalition Clinic Volunteers – Sault Ste. Marie
- Phil Kolehmainen – Ontonagon
- Mandy Larson, RN – Gladstone
- Thomas Mack, MD – Marinette, WI
- OSF St. Francis Hospital and Medical Group – Escanaba
- Rural Health Clinic Providers – St. Ignace
- St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marquette