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**Diligent Public Health Professionals  
Capture North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards**

*- Strong Support for Children by our Public Health Professionals -*

**RTP, NC** – The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation recognized public health professionals and local health departments for their work highlighting child health initiatives. A virtual presentation honoring the nominees and award recipients was part of the Fall Educational Conference of the North Carolina Public Health Association.

Marilyn Foote-Hudson, executive director of the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation applauds all public health professionals for their dedication especially during the pandemic. The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation provided funds totaling \$40,000 this year to celebrate the award recipients.

Those honored with awards, selected from nominations submitted by colleagues and chosen by a selection committee of public health professionals included:

**Lifetime Achievement Recognition:** Gayle Bridges Harris (retired), Durham County Department of Public Health

**Individual Achievement:** Adonna Simpson Lewis, Wake County Human Services

**Public Health Staff Achievement:** Tara Blackley, MA, MPH, MBA, Durham County Department of Public Health

**Local Health Department Achievement:**

Cabarrus Health Alliance, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program  
Cleveland County Public Health Center, Dental Clinic  
Stanly County Health Department, Dental Clinic

**Gayle Bridges Harris (retired), Lifetime Achievement Recognition Award**

- Second African American student to graduate from Duke University School of Nursing in 1972
- Path from public health nurse...to Public Health Director at Durham County Health Department
- Led Durham County's Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Cooperative Extension, Veteran Services and Durham Public Libraries...

- Collaborations working with many agencies, the County and Alliance Behavior Health Care, Durham Parks and Recreation, Duke University Health System, Lincoln Community Health Center, Public and Private Universities, United Way of the Greater Triangle...
- Helped bring health care to a county where some of the finest medical expertise and resources are located in the world, but county citizens experienced socioeconomic inequities, high poverty rates, a lack of affordable housing, and high rates of chronic disease.
- Gayle Bridges Harris' dedication to the citizens of Durham County has changed the health of the county's most vulnerable residents and worked to provide outstanding public health care for all citizens.

#### **Adonna Simpson Lewis, Individual Recognition Award**

- Influenced the health and wellbeing of many incarcerated pregnant women in NC
- Nationally Certified Childbirth Educator; DOULA; Dancing for Birth Educator; a Master Trainer- A Matter of Balance Instructor, and a Certified Health Counselor and BS in Public Health Education at North Carolina Central University
- Supported unborn babies and their mothers
- Developed and provides classes and materials for Prenatal, Childbirth and Parenting Education, Signs and Stages of Labor, Breathing Patterns, Medications Used During Labor, Reasons for Inductions, Medical Variations in Labor, Overview of Cesarean Births, Postpartum/Contraceptive Methods and Postpartum Blues/Depression/Psychosis
- Emphasizes infant development so mothers will have a better understanding of what to expect
- Mentor and role model and applauded her for providing care to these infants and mothers

#### **Tara Blackley, MA, MPH, MBA, Public Health Staff Recognition Award**

- Swiftly ensured Durham county's strategies for COVID-19 prevention and mitigation is data driven and included the youngest residents
- Met the challenge as Durham County was seeing COVID-19 positivity rates higher than expected and above state averages
- Led the Durham County Department of Public Health's efforts to develop a strong surveillance team for case investigation and daily calls of close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases
- Led efforts to work with the myriad of community partners to create a comprehensive data hub available to all community stakeholders, and an on-going free community COVID-19 testing site.
- Ensured testing sites were prepared to test infants, small children and their parents with a short wait time to secure an appointment was her priority.
- Collaborated with community partners

#### **Local Health Department Achievement Awards**

#### **Cabarrus Health Alliance, The Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program**

- Retaining children of need of nutrition support in WIC as they age can be crucial to their healthy development
- WIC is considered the nation's premier public health nutrition program for low-income families
- WIC has been shown to reduce the likelihood of future health problems

- Barriers to WIC participation include long wait times, cumbersome scheduling processes, and overall customer satisfaction
- Creation of an online appointment scheduling (OAS)/queue management tool specifically adapted to the WIC content
- Using this new tool, the participants have been retained and the program has grown, meeting the nutritional needs of an average of 300 new mothers and their children – this program is changing the lives of Cabarrus County citizens

#### **Cleveland County Public Health Center, Dental Clinic**

- For some individuals, seeking dental care over other essential needs such as groceries, health care and transportation is too great a challenge to overcome
- Concern brought together stakeholders to brainstorm and collaborate issues and solutions
- Several unmet health-related needs that included poor access to dental care, and students needed assistance with dental care
- The health department partnered with the school system and Graham's social worker to ensure that all students with emergent dental care needs received the care they needed
- The Dental Clinic staff are caring professionals who strongly believe in the importance of dental health and its ability to positively or negatively impact the life of a child

#### **Stanly County Health Department, Dental Clinic**

- Established at the Stanly County Health Department in 2002 to serve children, ages 0-19 years old
- Primary focus was to serve low income and special needs children in a clinical setting
- Serves children covered by Medicaid and Health Choice insurance or uninsured/private pay. In 2017, the program expanded to include children covered by private dental insurance
- In 2005 the operating room (OR) program was started and established to provide services for children with extensive dental needs who were unable to tolerate in office dental treatment
- Focus of the dental program has expanded to provide a school-based dental sealants program for second and third graders enrolled in 11 elementary schools (since 2016) and sixth and seventh graders enrolled in the four middle schools (since 2019)
- Also serves as a training location for students in dental profession programs

#### **The Awards Program**

The awards are designed to showcase exceptional and innovative programs that improve the lives of North Carolina's children. This year's awards focus on programs that address evidenced-based issues of significance to the community being served and working in partnership with others to help improve health outcomes for children. Key focus areas include asthma, dental health, environmental health (healthy homes), immunizations, low birth weight, mental health, nutrition and substance abuse, including drugs, alcohol and tobacco preventative efforts.

All nominees were recognized, and award recipients announced at the virtual ceremony today during the North Carolina Public Health Association's (NCPHA) fall meeting. The **Lifetime Achievement Recognition Award** is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to improving children's health services through a series of achievements, the **Individual Recognition Award** is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to improving children's health services through a single effort and the

**Public Health Staff Recognition Award** is given to full- or part-time employees or retirees of a local health department in recognition of their outstanding service in preventive health activities in their local community. The **Local Health Department Recognition Award** is given to health departments that have developed an innovative program that has produced measurable, sustainable outcomes. Letters to award recipients were overnighted, and the physical handing out of awards is scheduled at the 2021 Child Health Recognition Awards ceremony. For more information see our website at <http://www.ncgskfoundation.org/child-awards.html> .

The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards were established in 1994 to honor local health departments, public health staff and individual citizens for their dedication to improving child health. The awards include monetary grants for educational and other purposes. A Selection Committee of healthcare professionals established by NCPHA chose the award recipients.

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