



Norman L. Haug, M.D. Receives 2004 Harold E. Williamson Award

Norman L. Haug, M.D. has been known to credit everyone else in his life for his achievements. Although we can all agree that one's support network is important, it takes a special person to accomplish all that he has as a physician. It's those achievements, coupled with his unassuming and altruistic nature, that make him the ideal recipient of the 2004 Harold E. Williamson Award.

As the recipient of the award, Dr. Haug receives a \$10,000 donation from COPIC Medical Foundation to direct to the 501(c)(3) organization of his choice. Dr. Haug has elected to direct this donation to Valley Citizen's Foundation for Healthcare, Inc.

Dr. Haug was chosen from an exceptional slate of 13 other physician volunteers. Although a difficult decision, Dr. Jerome M. Buckley, Chairman and CEO of COPIC, said "The process was again difficult this year with 13 nominees—all of whom had more than impressive track records of service. Dr. Haug's selection was prompted not only by what he has *done* in the San Luis Valley, the Peace Corps, and in Central America, but for *who* he is. His commitment to not just the young and old, but also the underserved and even those incarcerated, is unparalleled."

About Dr. Haug

Dr. Haug was born and raised in Lakewood. He obtained his B.S. in Philosophy from Regis College in Denver and completed medical school at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

His volunteer service started early in his career when, between his internship and residency, Dr. Haug served in the Peace Corps in Malaysia. He also served in the United States Army in Malaysia and South Vietnam. He spent the early part of his career in Oklahoma where he served in various leadership roles in the University of Oklahoma health care system. Dr. Haug was instrumental in the establishment of a rural clinical rotation designed to prepare family physicians to practice in rural settings.

In 1981, Dr. Haug began practicing medicine in Del Norte, a small southwestern Colorado community of approximately 1,700. He joined the staff at Saint Joseph Hospital where he served multiple roles, including chief of staff, executive board member, emergency room physician, and medical director of the ambulance service.

Saint Joseph's closed its doors in 1993 due to a lack of funding, leaving a service area of 12,000 people without a local hospital. Dr. Haug responded by helping the Valley Citizen's Foundation for Health Care, Inc. to raise funds and gather equipment for reopening the hospital. In one year the organization raised enough funds to reopen its doors as the Rio Grande Hospital.

In addition to his private practice and his role at the hospital, Dr. Haug wears many more hats in his community, including:

- Volunteer medical provider at the Mineral County Health Center and the Rio Grande County Jail
- Rio Grande County Coroner
- Board member for the University of Colorado Area Health Education Center and the San Luis Valley HMO
- Medical director of the Colorado State Veterans Center at Homelake

- Medical director of the San Juan Care Center (formerly St. Joseph Nursing Home)
- Medical director of the San Luis Valley HMO
- Administrator of the Rio Grande Hospital

In addition to traveling to Malaysia with the Peace Corps, Dr. Haug volunteered his services to the communities devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

Dr. Haug's work has been instrumental in sustaining health care in Rio Grande County. He worked closely with the hospital board, its staff, and community members to reopen and maintain Rio Grande Hospital to provide health care in the western San Luis Valley. He has been involved with the rural health network that includes other hospitals in the valley. Under his direction, Rio Grande Hospital became one of the first three facilities in Colorado to become certified as a critical access hospital (CAH)—a designation that allows cost based Medicare reimbursement (a cost containment strategy aimed at increasing the sustainability of qualifying rural hospitals).

In addition, Rio Grande Hospital became the first CAH in the country to apply for the Housing and Urban Development 242 funding program that provides guaranteed loans to rural hospitals for construction of replacement facilities. The hospital board raised \$1.5 million to match the HUD loan, and a new, 35,000 square foot, 14 bed hospital replaced the former outdated structure in August 2004.

Dr. Haug was nominated by Dr. Bobby Howard, who said "Dr. Haug is a tireless family physician who by hard work and sheer force of character has reestablished and maintained medical services in two of Colorado's rural counties." Carol Kiesinger, board member of the Valley Citizens Foundation for Health Care, said "Dr. Haug is more than the typical 'country doctor.' He represents the *ideal* in rural family practice."

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Haug and all of the physicians nominated for this award. We sincerely thank those who took the time to honor the outstanding physicians in their communities and the physicians whose tremendous contributions benefit us all.

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