

NEBRASKA WILLIAMSON AWARD: Omaha Physician Honored for Volunteer

Dedicated. Tireless. Compassionate. While these words can be used to describe almost any physician, they ring especially true for Dr. Kristine McVea of Omaha. Her many contributions to the Nebraska health care community made her an excellent choice for COPIC's 2012 Harold E. Williamson Award.

The annual award recognizes a Nebraska physician for volunteer medical services and contributions to the Nebraska health care community. The award includes a \$10,000 grant to be designated to the health care nonprofit organization of the recipient's choice. Dr. McVea has chosen to direct her grant to IXIM Spirit of Solidarity (IXIM), an Omaha-based organization supporting Guatemalan immigrants living in Nebraska.

"My interest in Guatemala originated after we adopted [our son] Jackson. I began interacting with the Guatemalan community in Omaha, many of whom came from towns in the highlands" said Dr. McVea. "IXIM works to create partnerships between Guatemalans living in the U.S. and native born citizens. Nurses, physicians and other health care providers develop meaningful relationships and learn how to adapt their care to a cross-cultural environment." Dr. McVea also noted that the Guatemalan highlands are a very impoverished area with low literacy rates and limited access to health care.

Besides sitting on the board of IXIM, Dr. McVea is also the full-time medical director of OneWorld Community Health Center. When starting out as a volunteer in 1995, the center had only seven employees



Dr. McVea (right) received her award on September 28, 2012, as it was presented to her by Sandy Johnson of COPIC.

and four exam rooms. Since then, it has expanded to more than 300 employees who serve over 22,000 un- or under-insured patients every year.

Dr. McVea has dedicated much of her career to caring for the underserved and preparing other physicians to better meet their needs. "I initially went to medical school to help people," said Dr. McVea. "I wanted to go to a developing country initially, but I discovered there were plenty of opportunities to help the underserved in Omaha."

Also nominated for the 2012 award were DuWayne Carlson, M.D.; Gary Ensz, M.D.; Cristina Fernandez, M.D.; Jerry Fischer, M.D.; Sara Graybill, M.D.; Sabyasachi Mahapatra, M.D.; and Gamini Soori, M.D.

We are proud to recognize the contributions Dr. McVea and her fellow nominees have made to the Nebraska health care community. To learn more about the COPIC Medical Foundation's and its Harold E. Williamson Award, please visit www.copicfoundation.org.

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