



2018 Public Health Award Winners

Dr. Mary Ann Bender, Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce Health & Wellness

Through her work leading Chamber of Commerce's Health & Wellness sector, Dr. Bender has helped build community among health and wellness providers in Oak Park so that providers can more easily refer each other, understand each other's services, collaborate and support a continuum of wellness from holistic to eastern to western approaches and philosophies. This, in turn, has made it easier for residents to access services and understand options for healthier living. Her efforts have included bi-annual "business card exchanges" in which providers learn about each other's services and build referral networks, workshops for providers on how to educate the public, and the Chamber's annual Health Fair in April, which is chaired by Dr. Bender and attracted more than 600 attendees interested in learning more about local health services.

Dr. Sanjeed Dwivedi, Presence Behavioral Health

Through his work for Presence Behavior Health, a non-profit healthcare system, Dr. Dwivedi provides psychiatry services to children, adolescents and adults in Oak Park and the surrounding area. He was the dedicated physician for all of the adolescents that were a part of Anne's House, formerly a residential program for sexually exploited girls in Oak Park run by the Salvation Army. Although the program has ended, Dr. Dwivedi still coordinates care for some of the adolescents who lived there. He is dedicated to doing whatever he can to help all his patients receive great care, thrive at school and in their communities by advocating for the treatment they need to allow for long-term success.

Harriet Hawkins, Housing Forward Medical Clinic

For 22 years Hawkins has been volunteering her services as a registered nurse by providing medical care for people who are facing the challenges of homelessness through Housing Forward's Monday shelter site in Oak Park. Health of shelter clients is her priority as she makes assessments, delivers care, provides education and mentors student volunteers and provides critical one-on-one interaction with men, women and children facing homelessness. Hawkins routinely donates supplies and medical equipment to Housing Forward. Earlier this year, she volunteered to train and certify Housing Forward staff in CPR and AED, which totaled eight classes.

Candice Martin, Strive For Success

Martin has served as a Care Coordinator with the Oak Park non-profit Strive for Success since its inception five years ago. In her role, she helps improve the social determinates of health for students and their families by connecting them to mental health and other services as well as helping them navigate the sometimes complicated process. Martin has also built and maintained strategic relationships with Oak Park's school districts, administrators and service providers.

Andrea Rossi, Hatch Elementary School

As the Hatch Elementary School nurse, Rossi always puts students' needs first in a kind and compassionate way. She has developed and enforces protocols that help provide safer environments in the school, especially for children with food allergies. Rossi tracks the health concerns for members of the Hatch community and makes suggestions or follows up on events that may have affected a student's health. She also consults with parents to help provide a continuity of care when necessary. In addition, Rossi serves as team leader for all of the District 97 nurses, serves as adjunct faculty at Rush and UIC, and trains nursing students. She is a great leader, mentor, and collaborator both within and beyond the school.

West Cook YMCA

Over the past few years the West Cook YMCA has developed tailored, evidence-based programming to support individuals struggling with chronic disease. For example, the YMCA initiated a Diabetes Prevention Program, LIVESTRONG at the YMCA that supports cancer survivors, and EnhanceFitness, an arthritis management program. Most recently, the YMCA has kicked off a "Healthy Weight and Your Child" program with the goal of empowering children and families through education, healthy eating and physical activity to elicit positive change and to live a healthier lifestyle. In addition, the YMCA has implemented a Workplace Wellness program and programming specifically targeted towards the older adult population. The West Cook YMCA has also developed strong partnerships with local health care providers, including West Suburban Medical Center, Rush Oak Park, Loyola University Medical Center, and PCC Wellness. The West Cook YMCA truly exhibits an organization that has gone above and beyond the call of duty to create a healthier Oak Park.