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ODH HONORS OHIO'S RURAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS AND PROVIDERS

Annual awards slated for Sept. 17-18 Rural Health Information Technology Conference at Ohio University

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will honor two individuals, a hospital and a mental health program for their efforts to increase access to care in rural Ohio. The awards will be given Sept. 18, at the Rural Health Information Technology Conference at Ohio University in Athens.

“Addressing disparities in health care is one of my priorities,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D., who is one of the featured speakers at the conference. “These honorees were chosen because of their passionate efforts to address such disparities. I hope others will follow the examples they set.”

The winners are:

Rural Health Administrator: Kathleen Trace, director of Ohio University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine’s Community Health Program. Under Trace’s leadership, the program established a free clinic in Athens County and expanded clinics in Meigs and Washington counties; the clinics provide free exams, treatments and referrals to uninsured residents.

Rural Health Program: Interprofessional Partners for Appalachian Children, Athens. This new program increases access to quality mental health services for young children and includes assessment teams consisting of a physician, a mental health specialist, an audiologist, a speech therapist and a family care advocate.

Rural Health Provider: Theresa Ulrich of Perry County. During her 26 years with Perry County Family Practice and membership in the National Association of Rural Health Clinics, Ulrich helped hospitals and clinics develop rural health programs, allowing financially challenged but critical rural health care systems to survive.

Rural Hospital: Bucyrus Community. Honored for its recent expansion, Bucyrus Community is also recognized for its Affair of the Heart and Hearty Man’s Bowl programs, which conduct cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, respectively, for the Buff Up Bucyrus program and for its partnerships with community and business leaders to conduct area health fairs.

The awards will be given during the RHIOhio: Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Ohio Conference at Ohio University. RHIOhio will advance the dialogue on building partnerships, infrastructure and understanding around health information technologies (HIT) in rural areas and highlight the evolving federal, state and local initiatives aimed at implementing a wide range of HIT, telecommunications infrastructure and health care partnerships. For the full agenda, follow this link: <http://www.oucom.ohio.edu/rhiohio/Agenda.htm>.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Media are welcome to attend the conference.

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