



4756 Main St. Lisle, IL 60532 630.435.0257 or 800.826.7944 (In Illinois)

MEDIA RELEASE – PHOTOS AVAILABLE

President

Janet Albers, M.D.

President-Elect

Alvia Siddiqi, M.D.

Chair of the Board

Edward A. Blumen, M.D.

Treasurer

Sachin Dixit, M.D.

First Vice President

Donald Lurye, M.D.

Second Vice President

Asim Jaffer, M.D.

Executive Vice President

Vincent D. Keenan, C.A.E.

Board of Directors

2015

Abbas Hyderi, M.D.
Rachel Klamo, D.O.
Donald R. Lurye, M.D.

2016

Kristin Drynan, M.D.
Regina Kim, M.D.
Glenn Skow, M.D.

2017

Monica Fudala, M.D.
James Valek, M.D.
Tabatha Wells, M.D.

New Physicians

Michael A. Hanak, M.D.
Santina Wheat, M.D.

Resident

Emma Daisy, M.D.

Student

Kristina Dakis

AAFP Delegates

Kathleen J. Miller, M.D.
David J. Hagan, M.D.

AAFP Alternate Delegates

Steven D. Knight, M.D.
Asim Jaffer, M.D.

For Immediate Release

November 8, 2014

Contact: Ginnie Flynn, Vice President of Communications

Office: 630-427-8004 Cell: 630-263-4613 or gflynn@iafp.com

ILLINOIS FAMILY PHYSICIANS RECOGNIZED BY STATE MEMBER ORGANIZATION

(GURNEE, Ill.) The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) honored three outstanding physicians as part of the annual awards program held November 7 at Key Lime Cove Water Park and Resort in Gurnee. The IAFP Public Relations Task Force evaluated all the nominees and selected the recipients.

Family Physician of the Year: Gary Stuck, DO, FAAFP Lawn Medical Center, S.C. Oak Lawn

Dr. Gary Stuck joined Lawn Medical Center in 1986 after completing his residency training at (then) Rush Presbyterian St. Luke's/Christ Cooperative family medicine residency program with Christ Hospital. He has provided continuous comprehensive care to the Oak Lawn community for nearly three decades.

Dr. Stuck serves as president of this physician-owned group practice, he has engaged in numerous additional leadership roles that have furthered the quality of medical care enjoyed in both his community and the entire Advocate healthcare system. Dr. Stuck was a founding board member of Advocate Physician Partners (APP) and went on to serve as chair for thirteen years. APP is renowned as a model of true partnership between hospitals and physicians, both independent and employed. His experience has been shared in addresses to numerous physician groups, hospital leadership teams, and hospital boards about the clinical integration journey and helped other organizations on their own journey towards integration. He is a graduate with the founding class of the three-year Advocate Christ Hospital Physician Leadership Institute.

Stuck was nominated by Lee Sacks, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Advocate Health Care and participated in the awards presentation to Dr. Stuck. Sacks is also a past-president of IAFP and knows well the characteristics of a deserving Family Physician of the Year. Sacks has personally witnessed Dr. Stuck's leadership and guidance throughout his career in the Advocate system and as president of the Advocate Christ Physician Hospital Organization. "Throughout these leadership activities, Dr. Stuck has remained fully active in the practice of family medicine and is described by his patients as dedicated, supportive and compassionate."

Since 2001, Stuck has been teaching residents at Advocate Christ Family Medicine Residency program and devotes time and expertise to several community causes. He's an Advisory Board Member for the Southside Pregnancy Center and volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House at Hope Children's Hospital.

Dr. Stuck graduated from the Osteopathic Medical School in Des Moines, IA and then completed his family medicine residency training at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Family Medicine Residency in Chicago (now closed).

iafp@iafp.com
www.iafp.com

-Continued

Teacher of the Year – Employed: Sajjini Thomas, MD – Presence Resurrection Family Medicine Residency Program, Chicago

Sajjini Thomas joined (then) Resurrection Family Medicine Residency in 1997. She's the Obstetrics Coordinator and also chair of the elective rotation on family violence. She's a Clinical Assistant Professor at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine's Dept. of Family Medicine and a lecturer for the Dept. of Family Medicine at the Chicago Medical School. So her impact is felt across sites and academic levels.

Before arriving in the U.S. she had a career as an ophthalmologist in India and Great Britain. She's an Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) instructor and current Advisory Faculty for the ALSO program. This variety of educational experiences brings extra credentials to her work with the family medicine residents at Resurrection. "Family Medicine is a perfect fit for me as I am able to put to use all my previous training in Obstetrics and Ophthalmology," says Thomas. "I am able to spread this knowledge to students and residents and make it a one stop visit for most of my patients."

With all the knowledge she possesses, it's her personal touch that is most evident. "Technology and Computers can never substitute for the human side of the Doctor - Patient relationship. A long term relationship that instills trust builds motivation," she says.

Sajjini Thomas is best known around the residency program as "Mama Thomas," a reflection of how much the residents love her as a person. Some of the nurses call her "Amachi" which is Malayalam for "grandmother." According to one resident letter, many of the hospital's nursing staff and cafeteria staff rely on her as their own family physician. And she's always available to them for a side chat during rounds.

Dr. Thomas attended Medical School at Madras University in South India and earned her Diploma in Ophthalmology at Dublin University in Ireland. She completed her Internal Medicine Residency intern year at Chicago Medical School followed by her Family Medicine Residency training at Resurrection.

Teacher of the Year – Volunteer Faculty: Alisha T. Thomas, MD – PCC Austin

Alisha Thomas, MD Joined PCC Wellness – Austin Family Health Center upon residency completion at West Suburban Family Medicine Residency Program in Oak Park. Today she serves as the organization's community liaison, representing PCC at local events and health fairs.

She's a groundbreaking teacher, leading the pilot program called Education-Centered Medical Home for Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, providing longitudinal experience in the medical home philosophy. Students report to their ECMH every other week the entire four years of medical school. Her impact has been so profound that Northwestern is spreading the program and making it standard for all students. Dr. Thomas credit's her own program director, Scott Levin, MD, for inspiring her teaching career. "He is one of the most skilled 'off the cuff' family medicine educators I've ever encountered."

PCC Austin Medical Director Dr. Alyssa Jeanne Vest says, "Ever since she was a family medicine resident at West Suburban Medical Center, it has been apparent to all that Alisha is a natural teacher. She is always able to make teachable moments happen during the patient encounter, which makes it memorable to all students involved in the patient's care." Her students are choosing to become family physicians because of her.

Dr. Thomas holds certifications in Basic Life Support, Neonatal Resuscitation, Pediatric Life Support and Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO). She graduated from Northwestern University- Feinberg School of Medicine and completed residency training at West Suburban Family Medicine Residency, serving as Chief Resident 2008-09.

Distinguished Service Award – William Nelson, MD – LaGrange

This award is given at the discretion of the IAFP Public Relations Task Force, with confirmation by the Board of Directors, to commend exceptional individual members. The IAFP last gave this award in 2012, and before that in 2006.

-Continued -

After starting as a general practitioner in the 1960's and building a successful practice, he decided to join his old partner, Dr. Kenneth Kessel, who started the first family medicine residency training program in Illinois in the 1976. Dr. Nelson was the Assistant Residency Director at MacNeal Hospital's Residency Training Program with Dr. Kessel until he was asked to take over as the Program Director at the Residency Training Program in LaGrange in 1981.

His total career spans 55 years providing patient care in Illinois with 38 years as a family medicine educator.

He was the Director of that Program for over 30 years and at age 82 is still at the program. In his current role as executive director of the residency program, he continues to teach as a vital member of their faculty. He also taught one of the best – his son, Kenneth Nelson, MD – the 2012 IAFP Family Physician of the Year. His long career educated many family physicians and helped pave the way for family medicine education in our state. He received the 2009 Excellence in Teaching Award from Adventist LaGrange Family Medicine Residency and their Crystal Service Award in 1998.

"One thing that Dr. Nelson taught me, that sticks with me to this day, is the ever-present Art of Medicine, which no one in all my training ever stressed to me more than he did," summarizes Eric M. Spratford, MD of Westchester. "Day in and day out, I realize through all my patient encounters that the Art of Medicine may be at the heart and soul of family medicine as it was intended to be."

William Nelson, MD Graduated from Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in 1959 and completed his general practice residency training at MacNeal Memorial Hospital.

President's Award – Janice Benson, MD – University of Chicago/NorthShore Family Medicine Residency

Each year, the outgoing Academy has the privilege to present a President's Award to honor a person or an organization for outstanding contributions that reflect the IAFP's mission to promote excellence in the health and well-being of Illinois families. Edward A. Blumen, MD chose to honor Janice Benson, MD mainly for her work with the Family Medicine Midwest Foundation.

"Dr. Benson's entire career has been devoted to growing, nurturing and educating family physicians and she brings a boundless energy to fueling the family medicine workforce," says Blumen.

As the current Vice Chair of Education and Clinical Associate Professor in Family Medicine at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine/NorthShore Health System, she has "gone global" and is bringing the concepts of Family Medicine to Wuhan University, in China along with her colleague Dr. Mari Egan. Dr. Benson helped create and was the founding Board Chair of Family Medicine Midwest. Over its three years in operation, this multi-state partnership has showcased Midwest family medicine to more than 500 students and has broadened the horizons for more than 300 family medicine resident physicians.

She has received a number of Teaching Awards including that of IAFP's Family Medicine Teacher of the Year honor in 1997. During her career she has served on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians, the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, and the Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors. She has personally trained over 300 family physicians, and more than half of them work and teach in medically underserved areas.

-30-

Founded in 1947, the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians represents over 4,500 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students throughout Illinois, dedicated to improving the health of the people of Illinois through support and education of the family physicians who care for them. Learn more at www.iafp.com and follow us on twitter @IllinoisAFP.

