



**Press Release – to Health and Local Desks  
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December 6, 2008  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THREE FAMILY PHYSICIANS HONORED WITH PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FROM  
THE ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS**

ST. LOUIS - The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians celebrated its tradition of caring for Illinois and honored some of its finest family physicians tonight. Family physicians from around the state gathered at Windows Off Washington in St. Louis for the annual awards banquet for the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP).

This year's family medicine honors include:

Family Physician of the Year – William F. Hays, MD of Logan Primary Care in Herrin  
Family Medicine Full-time Teacher of the Year – Robert Ewart, MD of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield  
Family Medicine Part-time Teacher of the Year – Michael Mendoza, MD, MPH of the University of Chicago – Pritzker School of Medicine  
President's Award (3) –Margaret A. Kirkegaard, MD, MPH; Susan L. Nagele, MD and Kelly Carroll, MD

**President's Award** – The IAFP President's Award is given at the discretion of the president to honor an individual or organization that has been instrumental in furthering the missions of the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians. Steven D. Knight, IAFP president for 2007-08, selected three outstanding family physicians for President's Awards this year.

**Margaret A. Kirkegaard, MD, MPH  
Medical Director, Illinois Health Connect**

Dr. Kirkegaard is medical director of Illinois Health Connect, which is the primary care case management program for Illinois Medicaid and All Kids patients. Launched in 2006 Illinois Health Connect ensures that Medicaid patients have a medical home with a primary care provider. The medical home gives patients a starting point for all their health care needs with a primary care physician who knows them and their medical history. Illinois Health Connect works to keep patients out of the emergency rooms and provides their physicians with current information to better track all their Medicaid and All Kids patients.

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Dr. Kirkegaard, a former IAFP board member and the 2006 IAFP Family Medicine Teacher of the Year, has spearheaded the massive transformation process. Her leadership included recruiting and managing 5,000 primary care physicians to participate in Illinois Health Connect. She has worked with the Illinois Department of Health Care and Family Services and the primary care physician community to develop a process and payment system that participating practices need to optimally care for Illinois Medicaid and All Kids patients. As a result of her dedication to improving care, more than 1.8 million Illinois patients now have a primary care physician and a medical home to manage their care.

"I'm the third generation family physician in my family. After working in private practice for a number of years, I felt they system was broken and patients weren't getting the best possible care, despite the fact that their doctors work very hard. So I shifted my focus to the most vulnerable in our health care system, the low socio-economic patients who are underserved. Illinois Health Connect has been a wonderful opportunity for me to make a real impact where I see the greatest need."

"Family physicians have worked hard to provide the best possible care to our Medicaid patients," said Dr. Knight. "But the state needed a system to better communicate with the patients and the providers to meet our shared goals for their care. Illinois Health Connect is the first big step in that direction. With her passion for helping the underserved and her skills as a family physician, Illinois Health Connect has thrived under the leadership of Dr. Margaret Kirkegaard."

For more information on Illinois Health Connect, visit [www.illinoishealthconnect.com](http://www.illinoishealthconnect.com)

**Susan L. Nagele, MD**  
**Kiminini Cottage Hospital, Kenya**

Dr. Nagele finished her family medicine residency training at SIU Carbondale in 1984 and then joined Mary Knoll Lay Missioners. She has spent the last 24 years in Africa, including Tanzania, southern Sudan and Kenya. In each location, she has worked to develop primary care services and establish inpatient services, including obstetrics and minor surgery. At one point during her time in Sudan, she was the only doctor for more than 30,000 displaced persons in two camps.

Since 2003, she has served in the small town of Kiminini outside of Kitale, Kenya. She works at the Kiminini Cottage Hospital, a 30-bed facility where she does direct patient care and is also assisting in the training of the first class of family medicine residents – called registrars – in Kenya.

Dr. Nagele and Dr. Knight were classmates at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, class of 1981. "We all had great altruistic visions when we applied to med school," said Dr. Knight. "Susan has lived out that vision unlike anyone I have ever known by going to Africa and living in remote areas with meager resources to care for the very poor and downtrodden. Whenever I feel that I have it tough, she inspires me to push on and take care of those who need care but cannot afford it."

She has been honored with the SIU School of Medicine Distinguished Alumni Award in 1996 and the Inspiring Women Alumna Achievement Award from the SIU Foundation in 2006 for her devotion to bringing health care to some of the world's neediest people.

Dr. Nagele witnessed first-hand the post-election violence that took place in Kenya in January. The incumbent defeated the opposition candidate, but international observers reported various irregularities in tallying and reporting of the votes. After the results were announced, the country erupted in violence. The mountain near Kiminini erupted in flames as rioters attacked and burned members of the Kikuyus, the largest tribe in Kenya. Nearly 9000 people were displaced to Kiminini town, where they received care free of charge in the hospital.

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For more information on her mission work in Africa visit

[http://www.mklaymissioners.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=0](http://www.mklaymissioners.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=0)

**Kelly Carroll, MD**  
**Genesis Health Group, Silvis**

Dr. Carroll has been active with the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians since 1989 and served as president in 1997-98. Since 1999 he has represented the IAFP as a delegate to the American Academy of Family Physicians. In that role he has been a trusted voice for Illinois family physicians, casting Illinois' vote on hundreds of resolutions covering the wide spectrum of issues facing family medicine. After the 2008 AAFP Congress of Delegates in San Diego this past September, Dr. Carroll decided not to seek a sixth two-year term as delegate.

Dr. Carroll has served the IAFP and its Foundation in many capacities at the state level. He's met with state lawmakers on important policy issues, as well as represented Illinois family physicians in government hearings and in the press. He continues to be active with the Rock Island Medical Society and as a member of the Governmental Affairs Council of the Illinois State Medical Society. He has practiced at Genesis Health Group for 21 years and currently serves as its laboratory director.

"Kelly has been such a steady leader and respected presence on our IAFP board of directors since he was first elected to the board in 1991. We are truly grateful for his constant commitment to the Academy the past 17 years. We also extend our thanks to his family and his practice, for allowing him to serve his specialty at such a high level all this time."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: If you would like to request a digital photo or set up an interview, please contact Ginnie Flynn at IAFP at 630-427-8004 or via e-mail at [gflynn@iafp.com](mailto:gflynn@iafp.com). For more information on the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians, please see our web site [www.iafp.com](http://www.iafp.com).