



Riverside County Public Health Community Champions

Each year, as part of National Public Health Month, Riverside University Health System-Public Health, honors five individuals or organizations with its Public Health Champion awards.

The five recipients represent the five supervisorial districts and are selected; because of their dedication and accomplishment in improving the health status of Riverside County residents; to recognize the collaboration with Public Health and/or other organizations focused on public and population health; and because of their sensitivity to the needs of special populations and reducing health disparities in care and outcomes.

These individuals and organizations have gone beyond what would normally be expected of them. For some it is a personal tragedy or hardship that motivates them, while for others it is the dedication and commitment to help others. We are honored to give them such much-deserved recognition.

2016

First District

Pamela Garlich, Garlich Family Child Care

Garlich Family Child Care is being recognized for its tremendous work becoming certified under the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care tool, or NAPSACC. The Garlich Family Child Care met the 55 nutrition and physical activity requirements to become NAP SACC certified in June 2013, and has continued to embrace the Healthy Eating and Active Play guidelines for the program since then. The care center organized the meet-and-greets for other owners to encourage them to participate in NAP SACC and allowed the 5-hour training taught by UC Riverside Extension to be held at its facility.

Second District

Laura Roughton

Laura Roughton was the very first and current mayor of Jurupa Valley. She has been a community volunteer with the Jurupa Unified School District, Girl Scouts of San Geronio Council and the American Red Cross. She is a member of the Santa Ana River Trail Advisory Group and is a leader of the Healthy Jurupa Valley initiative. Laura has been an integral part of the Riverside County Health Coalition and on the WRCOG Health Committee. She is tireless in her efforts to bring Healthy Communities to Jurupa Valley and to Riverside County as a whole, serving numerous times as a panelist or panel moderator at conferences and workshops focusing on building healthy communities.

Third District

Dr. Chawki Harfouch

Dr. Chawki Harfouch is an advocate for his patients and for public health. He was recently awarded the Patient's Choice Award. Dr. Harfouch applies his infectious disease expertise to difficult cases such as complicated tuberculosis patients and individuals with meningococcal infections. He collaborates with Public Health to ensure appropriate actions are taken to protect the community, while meeting the health care needs of the individual patient. Dr. Harfouch is affiliated with multiple hospitals in Riverside County and has been in practice for 13 years. He received his medical degree from St. Joseph's University Medical School. He is an internist, specializing in infectious disease.

Fourth District

Regional Access Project

Thanks to the relationships RAP has built with eight local agencies, water stations have been installed at several local schools, Boys & Girls Clubs and a residential apartment complex. RAP's relationship with HealthCorps helped get the message of healthier lifestyles out to high school students and staff; one student from the HealthCorps academy even decided to enter public health nutrition because of her work with the Re-Think Your Drink program. The efforts of RAP in the community have given thousands of residents improved access to safe drinking water as a healthier option and spread the word about personal health empowerment.

Fifth District

Living Way Christian Church

Throughout the year, Living Way Christian Fellowship Church serves the community by offering a variety of community events to members and residents of Moreno Valley. Activities include monthly health forums, like those that focus on cancer prevention. It has provided home-maintenance services to seniors on the weekends, as well as clothing giveaways. During the holidays, the church offers Thanksgiving meals to the community and sponsors a Turkey Giveaway. For Easter, Living Way Church hosted an Easter Egg Hunt at a local park for the community; and supported students and youth by providing college prep programs for high school students along with tutoring resources. In 2015, Living Way

partnered with Public Health's Black Infant Health (BIH) Program by providing space where BIH prenatal group sessions could be held. In 2016, Living Way Christian Fellowship continues to support the BIH program.

2015

First District

Robert Roy

For his work to place Automated External Defibrillators (AED) in schools and other public buildings. It was a campaign started following the tragic death of Mr. Roy's 14-year-old son, Travis. Through the Travis R. Roy Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fund, Mr. Roy has brought the life-saving device to schools in Temecula, Murrieta, San Jacinto and San Diego County. Mr. Roy is also a District 1 representative on the Emergency Medical Care Committee.

Second District

Gabriel Maldonado

Mr. Maldonado is one of the driving forces behind TruEvolution, which collaborates with the Department of Public Health HIV and STD programs to link HIV-positive youth to HIV treatment. TruEvolution held three LEAPOUT events in Riverside that covered the topics of HIV/AIDS among people of color, combating LGBT violence and discrimination and human trafficking.

Third District

Dr. Richard Goldberg

Dr. Goldberg has been instrumental in working with the Department of Public Health in establishing a cadre of Medical Volunteers in the Idyllwild area. He has also been the point person to coordinate trainings and exercises with the Medical Volunteers to ensure that they are ready to respond as part of the coordinated public health and medical response system. Dr. Goldberg has spearheaded the annual flu clinics since 2006. As a result of his efforts, the community of Idyllwild is better prepared to respond to any public health emergency – which ultimately translates to reducing illness and/or saving lives.

Fourth District

Aurora Wilson

Wilson worked to enhance the health and well-being of the Coachella Valley by linking health with community planning and active transportation. Aurora also works on initiatives to address the homeless population and encourages our partnership to provide Public Health Nursing Services at Roy's Desert Resource Center.

Fifth District 5

Melanie Nieman

Nieman works for the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD). For the past two years, the department's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention and WIC Programs have

partnered with EMWD on the Rethink Your Drink Initiative. EMWD encourages school-age children to learn more about the benefits of drinking tap water, healthy eating and physical activity.

2014

First District:

The Carolyn Wylie Center.

Lisa Dryan accepted the award for their work with families and children with sensory-motor disabilities, autism and various emotional, behavioral and health problems.

Second District:

Rick Bruns, Rubidoux Nursing Center/Orange Tree Nursing Center.

Mr. Bruns is being honored for his work as a disaster coordinator and participating in county preparedness exercises and emergency planning for the health care facilities.

Third District:

Cardenas Markets

Cardenas Markets was recognized for its 10-year partnership with the County's Network for a Healthy California and commitment to improve the nutrition and wellbeing of county residents and customers.

Fourth District:

Desert AIDS Project

Desert AIDS Project was honored for its Get Tested Coachella Valley campaign to ensure everyone knows their HIV status, are treated promptly and to encourage regional hospitals and medical facilities to expand their HIV testing.

Fifth District:

Jan Merrick

Jan Merrick, San Gorgonio Memorial Hospital, was honored for her role as disaster coordinator, her commitment to emergency planning and response and unparalleled open communications with public health emergency preparedness staff.