



Minnesota Hospital Association



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## Hospital awards honor standouts across state

*Individual and organizational winners excel at volunteering, patient safety, legislative advocacy, other roles*

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Minnesota hospitals on Friday lauded those caregivers, administrators, volunteers and others whose standout contributions in 2006 bettered health care in their hospitals across the state.

The Minnesota Hospital Association's 2006 Awards presentation in Plymouth included four individual awards and 11 organizational nods. Independent judges honored:

- **Lawrence J. Massa** — “**Stephen Rogness Distinguished Service Award**” — MHA's highest honor. Massa's track record of providing vital hospital leadership and advocacy for years is evidenced by his service as past Minnesota Hospital Association Board chairman, and he continues to be a leader on various MHA committees. Massa recently represented MHA on the Citizens League's Healthcare Facilities Study, and he has testified numerous times at the Capitol and has met with legislators in both St. Paul and Washington. Massa is CEO of **Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar**.
- **Celia Nieman** — “**Caregiver of the Year.**” An RN at **St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls**, Nieman has been caring for others for more than 50 years. A manager since 1969, Nieman has also served on numerous committees charged with customer satisfaction. In 1990 she earned the highest award St. Gabriel's bestows on staff — the Francis Award. And Nieman's work as a volunteer for the Unity Family Hospice,

the Morrison County Public Health Advisory Committee and the St. Gabriel's Hospital Auxiliary no doubt contributed to the reasons why Little Falls' mayor marked Nieman's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the hospital in 2005 as "Celia Nieman Day in Little Falls."

- **Mary Flaa** — "**Volunteer of the Year.**" Flaa has logged more than 40 years and an estimated 8,000 hours of service to help patients, her hospital and the state auxiliary. Flaa's contributions at **St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth** has encompassed everything from acting as a buyer for the gift shop for a quarter century to supporting patients and their families in the surgery department's waiting room. Flaa also has held numerous local and state auxiliary top leadership positions, and she has been active on the Health Care of Minnesota board.
- **Steve Perkins** — "**Trustee of the Year.**" Board chairman of the **Sioux Valley Luverne Hospital Community Advisory Board**, Perkins led negotiations to bring the hospital into Sioux Valley Regional Health Services system. That partnership led to the construction of a new \$20 million medical campus and the installation of a new electronic medical record system.

Other awards recognized exceptional efforts to improve *patient care and patient safety*:

- **United Hospital in St. Paul** was recognized in the large hospital category for "**Innovation of the Year in Patient Care.**" The hospital significantly reduced the occurrence of harmful falls among its geriatric psychiatry patients through consistently applying a series of safety measures.
- For its high-tech telemedicine services that bring together rural patients and critical-care specialists miles away, **Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center** was named the small-hospital winner for "**Innovation of the Year in Patient Care.**"
- For implementing a number of interventions that cut down the number of patient falls by 64 percent since January 2006, **Regions Hospital in St. Paul** was the recipient of the "**Patient Safety Improvement**" award in the large hospital category.
- **Fairview Lakes Health Services of Wyoming** was recognized as the small-hospital "**Patient Safety Improvement**" winner. The hospital decreased medication errors with the help of new electronic medication reconciliation and other procedures.

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Two awards recognized *community programs* that address broader health challenges:

- The “**Community Health Commitment Award**” for large hospitals went to both **Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids** and **Unity Hospital in Fridley** for their joint Healthy School Initiative, the “Power Hour.” The after-school exercise and nutrition program aided children in the Anoka-Hennepin School District.
- **Buffalo Hospital** won the small-hospital “**Community Health Commitment Award**.” Buffalo’s multi-tiered “Commitment to Community Health” programs improved traffic safety, reduced obesity and bettered cardiovascular health.

Several honors focused on *work force issues*, including staff retention and recruitment:

- For various retention strategies including hiring a retention specialist and creating work teams devoted to boosting loyalty, **United Hospital in St. Paul** was selected as this year’s large hospital “**Best Minnesota Hospital Work Place**.” United cut its turnover rate in half from 2000 to 2006.
- In the small hospital category, this year’s “**Best Minnesota Hospital Work Place**” was the **New Ulm Medical Center**. The hospital enjoyed skyrocketing employee engagement scores and better staff retention after, among other measures, leaders began giving each department scorecards that measure staff success.
- **Hennepin County Medical Center of Minneapolis** was awarded the “**Health-care Career Promotion**” award in the large hospital category for, among other programs, a collaboration that trains Phillips neighborhood residents and current hospital employees in non-health care jobs for health-care positions.
- The **New Ulm Medical Center** garnered the small-hospital “**Health Care Career Promotion**” accolade. The center partnered with the Girl Scouts Peacepipe Council in Southwestern Minnesota to offer a health career fair for 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade girls.

Finally, in recognition of its record of partnering with hospitals, accounting and business consulting firm **Wipfli** was bestowed with the “**Associate Member of the Year**” award.

*The Minnesota Hospital Association is a trade association representing Minnesota’s hospitals and health systems.*