

Awards Honor Essential Hospitals' Work to Improve Quality, Population Health

America's Essential Hospitals recognizes Gage Award winners and honorable mention recipients at its annual conference, VITAL2023, in Chicago.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, June 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- America's Essential Hospitals, whose more than 300 members care for low-income and other marginalized people, today recognized four member hospitals for outstanding work to improve health care quality and population health.



The association announced [2023 Gage Award winners](#) at a luncheon at its annual meeting, VITAL2023, in Chicago. Named for association founder Larry Gage, the awards recognize creative, successful programs that improve patient care and serve community needs.



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“Essential hospitals believe all people deserve exceptional and equitable care, so programs to improve quality and reduce socioeconomic barriers to care are deeply engrained in the fabric of our members,” says Kalpana Ramiah, DrPH, MSc, America’s Essential Hospitals’ vice president of innovation and director of Essential Hospitals Institute. “We commend our members for their commitment to a role no one else fills: providing high-quality care for all.”

2023 AWARD FOR QUALITY

This award recognizes activities to improve quality of care or that mitigate threats to patient safety.

Winner: UK HealthCare, Lexington, Ky.

UK HealthCare and the University of Louisville designed a value-based Medicaid directed payment program to improve care for Kentucky's toughest health challenges.

"Kentuckians face some of the highest rates of disease in the country, particularly for cancer, heart disease, obesity, behavioral health, and substance use disorders. As part of our academic health system's promise to advance Kentucky, we have partnered with Kentucky Medicaid to transform the quality of patient care to improve the health of the commonwealth," says Robert DiPaola, MD, UK's provost and acting co-executive vice president for health affairs. "I'm honored that this work is being recognized on a national level."

From July 2019 to June 2022, UK HealthCare improved care for target health conditions, including increasing:

- Depression screening by 64 percentage points.
- Well child visits for children ages 3 to 6 by 45 percentage points.
- Blood pressure control by 27 percentage points.

Honorable Mention: NYC Health + Hospitals, New York

To improve health equity, NYC Health + Hospitals launched the Care Improvement Contest initiative to build staff capacity to lead successful quality improvement projects.

Eleven teams developed projects focused on nurse leader rounding, interdisciplinary provider rounding, empathy skill building and teach-back training, complex discharge planning and post-discharge follow-up, and daily management system boards and whiteboards. Besides improving patient experience scores in winning units, the contest facilitated a systemwide increase in patient experience scores.

"We are incredibly proud of our NYC Health + Hospitals Care Improvement Contest teams for implementing innovative solutions to improve health care delivery that meets and satisfies the needs of the communities we serve," says Mitchell Katz, MD, president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals.

2023 AWARD FOR POPULATION HEALTH

This award recognizes activities focused on social determinants of health (SDOH), such as food insecurity, homelessness, and other socioeconomic factors.

Winner: Parkland Health, Dallas

To mitigate disparities illuminated through a Community Health Needs Assessment, Parkland Health established nine population health initiatives focused on access to care, behavioral

health, breast health, diabetes, hypertension, maternal and child health, pediatric asthma, sexually transmitted infections, and cultural competency.

Parkland hired community health workers from target ZIP codes to perform health screenings, connect individuals with social resources, and provide cultural competency materials. The health system implemented a community health record to document screenings and care navigation.

Between 2019 and 2022, Parkland reported:

- A 264 percent increase in primary care encounters.
- A 123 percent increase in annual hypertension screenings.
- A 40 percent increase in the percentage of newly diagnosed HIV patients treated within 30 days.
- A 16 percent increase in blood pressure control.
- A 12 percent increase in chlamydia testing within at-risk ZIP codes.
- A 7 percent increase in annual mammograms.

“We are honored to be recognized by America’s Essential Hospitals for our work to advance health equity in Dallas County. At Parkland Health, we strive to ensure equitable care for our patients and to address inequities in health care at the community level,” says Fred Cerise, MD, Parkland’s president and CEO. “To be recognized for our work on the CHNA initiatives is a tribute to our many dedicated team members and community partners who are working together to address health disparities among the people we serve.”

Honorable Mention: Sinai Chicago, Chicago

Sinai Urban Health Institute, the health system’s community-driven research center, introduced community health workers (CHWs) to the emergency department to identify SDOH needs among patients with nonfatal gun violence injuries and complex needs. CHWs contact patients post-discharge, screen patients for SDOH needs, reinforce discharge instructions, and help patients navigate follow-up care and community resources.

Since July 2020, Sinai Chicago has referred more than 2,131 high-risk patients to the program. Fifty-two percent were successfully screened for SDOH, 83 percent of whom were connected to services to target food insecurity, transportation, housing insecurity, behavioral health, asthma, and domestic violence. □Patients screened by CHWs had a 30-day readmissions rate of 22 percent, compared with a 31 percent rate for patients referred and not screened.

“Sinai Chicago and Sinai Urban Health Institute are honored to receive an honorable mention in the 2023 Gage Awards for our Community Health Worker Support Program,” says Ngozi Ezike, MD, president and CEO of Sinai Chicago. “Our CHW Support program has greatly improved health outcomes in the community.”

A new guide, [Excellence and Innovation in Care: The 2023 Gage Awards](#), features more about these and other member programs.

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[About America's Essential Hospitals](#)

America's Essential Hospitals is the leading association and champion for hospitals dedicated to equitable, high-quality care for all, including those who face social and financial barriers to care. Since 1981, America's Essential Hospitals has advanced policies and programs that promote health, health care access, and equity. We support our more than 300 members with advocacy, policy development, research, education, and leadership development. Communities depend on essential hospitals for care across the continuum, health care workforce training, research, public health and health equity, and other services. Essential hospitals innovate and adapt to lead all of health care toward better outcomes and value.

Carl Graziano

America's Essential Hospitals

+ + +1 202.585.0102

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