

The Rhode Island Health Center Association (RIHCA) hosted its annual meeting on Monday, October 16, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, Rhode Island. At the breakfast meeting, RIHCA released its 2016-2017 annual report and celebrated its 45th anniversary. RIHCA's President and CEO, Jane A. Hayward, as well as Dennis Roy, President and CEO of East Bay Community Action Program and Board Chair of RIHCA, made opening remarks to welcome over 130 attendees. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse attended the event and made brief remarks in support of Rhode Island's health centers. Other members of the congressional delegation, including Senator Jack Reed, Congressman Jim Langevin and Congressman David Cicilline provided videotaped remarks to recognize RIHCA's 45th anniversary.

Colleen Meiman, Director of Regulatory Affairs for the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), delivered the keynote address. She discussed current health policy and regulatory issues at the federal level affecting the health centers, including the Health Center and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Funding Cliffs, the Affordable Care Act, and the 340B program.

RIHCA also honored three distinguished award recipients at the annual meeting:

- **John H. Chafee Healthcare Leadership Award** – *Linda Katz, JD*, Policy Director and co-founder of The Economic Progress Institute (formerly The Poverty Institute)
- **John J. Cunningham, M.D. Citizen's Awards** – *Josiah D. "Jody" Rich, MD, MPH*, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Brown University, and a practicing Infectious Disease Specialist at The Miriam Hospital and at the Rhode Island Department of Corrections
- **Clinical Leadership Award** – *Sarah Fessler, MD, FAAFP*, Chief Medical Officer and practicing Family Medicine Physician at East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)

Key findings from the annual report indicate:

- RIHCA's ten member organizations served 179,746 patients with 874,400 visits;
- 57.2% of patients at Rhode Island's federally qualified health centers had health coverage through Medicaid; 10.8% were uninsured; 9.4% were covered by Medicare; 4.2% dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare; and 22% were privately insured;
- The community health centers saw 93,813 Medicaid patients, serving over 30% of Rhode Island's Medicaid beneficiaries;
- Community health centers are small business that create 1,407 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in communities throughout the state;
- 55,104 dental patients and 12,161 behavioral health patients were served, demonstrating the community health centers' commitment to integrating medical, dental and behavioral health care

About Rhode Island Health Center Association

Since 1972, the Rhode Island Health Center Association (RIHCA) has been the voice of community based primary health care programs. Focusing on Rhode Island's community health centers, RIHCA plays a vital role in educating federal, state and local policymakers about issues relating to health care and the role of the community health centers in the health care continuum. RIHCA supports the health centers in their efforts to provide every Rhode Islander with high-quality health care regardless of their ability to pay. RIHCA has ten organizational members, eight of which are Section 330 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). Primary medical care services are available in more than 30 service delivery locations across the state. In addition, Block Island Medical Center is an island-based health center and the Providence Center, a community mental health organization, is our first Associate Member.

About the Awards

The John H. Chafee Healthcare Leadership Award goes to an individual, group or organization whose work embodies the spirit of the late Senator John H. Chafee, demonstrating his commitment to strengthen the health care safety net and provide true justice and equity in health care for all.

The John J. Cunningham, MD Citizen's Award goes to an individual, group or organization whose work promotes the goal of access to primary care for the underserved and uninsured, and who recognizes the importance of the Rhode Island community health centers in meeting the health care needs of the underserved.

The Clinical Leadership Award is presented annually to the health center clinician who best demonstrates continued clinical excellence and professional development, innovation in practice or policies, and leadership in areas that benefit their organization or the system of care.

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