



For Immediate Release
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**New Hampshire Hospital Association
Honors Outstanding Service in Healthcare at 2023 Annual Meeting**

CONCORD, NH – At its Annual Meeting recently held during October 15 – 17, 2023, the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA) honored four individuals from across the state who have made significant contributions to their hospital or the healthcare field.

“It was our honor and privilege to recognize the ongoing efforts and leadership of these extraordinary individuals, as they strive to make improvements in health care access, quality and services to support their patients, staff and communities,” stated Steve Ahnen, president of the New Hampshire Hospital Association

Below is a list of the recipients for the 2023 NHHA Awards of Excellence:

Elizabeth Cooley, MD, Weeks Medical Center, Lanchester, was recognized with *The James A. Hamilton Founder’s Award*, NHHA’s highest honor. The Founder’s Award is presented only as appropriate for outstanding service to health care on behalf of the people of New Hampshire. The recipient shall be a person whose integrity and constant commitment are evident to those around them, and whose extraordinary achievement or exceptional contribution in the interest of human health and well-being has extended into the local community, state or nation. Dr. Cooley was recognized as an excellent clinician who is passionate, driven and impactful in her work and for her expertise, leadership and insights to improve overall population health in her region. Several important initiatives, undertaken by Dr Cooley, have shown better health outcomes for individuals in her region. Of note, Dr. Cooley’s direct involvement in health improvements for her community resulted in a large grant dedicated to supplementing access to primary care through use of paramedics to serve individuals who otherwise would not be served due to chronic health issues, life circumstances or who would be at risk of rehospitalization.

Susan Reeves, EdD, RN, CENP, Executive Vice President, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Dartmouth Health Chief Nursing Executive, Lebanon, was recognized with the *Leslie A.*

Smith President's Award, bestowed upon an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the New Hampshire Hospital Association, and in recognition of their dedicated service to the affairs, management and growth of the Association and its affiliates. Dr. Reeves is an accomplished nurse, health care leader, and advocate. Within her organization, she is passionate about standards of practice in nursing, building career ladders for nurses, establishing a formal center for professional education and development, supporting research infrastructure and advocating for the organization's geriatric center of excellence designation. Outside her organization, her interests in public health, quality, patient safety and organizational ethics exemplify her as a superior leader and role model across the state. She served as an important voice during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that all hospitals remained aligned and supported while they all were caring for a high number of very highly complex patients.

Kathy Barnard, Trustee for Huggins Hospital, Wolfeboro, was recognized as the ***Outstanding Trustee of the Year Award***. This award is presented to a trustee of a New Hampshire Hospital Association member institution whose achievement in the field of hospital trusteeship stands out above all others, and who serves as an example to encourage others in the pursuit of excellence in hospital governance. Ms. Barnard has served on her hospital board of trustees for over a decade. During her tenure, she has served in a variety of leadership roles including executive committee member, planning and facilities, and quality care and patient experience. Above and beyond her committee work, she is a champion for quality improvement and improved patient experiences. In addition to her board roles, she is actively engaged in many town boards and committees making an impact on issues of importance to her and her fellow community members.

Robert Zwolak, MD of the Manchester Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, was the recipient of the ***Medical Staff Award*** for outstanding service to his hospital and community, an honor bestowed upon a medical staff member whose professional performance has strengthened the cooperation between the hospital and the medical staff and who brings credit to the institution and the community. Dr. Zwolak has a long history of accomplishments, both locally and nationally. Among those achievements, he has led the way in supporting the next generation of physicians, has made significant contributions to improved access to specialty care especially for New Hampshire veterans who live in rural areas and has expanded the clinical expertise that is now available at the Manchester VA Medical Center.

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About New Hampshire Hospital Association

Hospitals have been collaborating through the New Hampshire Hospital Association since 1934. The Association's mission is to lead through advocacy, education, and information in support of its member hospitals and health systems as they strive to improve the health of the patients and communities they serve.