

# North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND HEALTH

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## NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Thanks North Carolina's Child Advocates

### *Public Health Professionals and Health Departments Across the State Honored*

Charlotte, NC – North Carolina's public health professionals today were honored with GlaxoSmithKline Child Health Recognition Awards for improving children's health through a variety of programs. All nominees were recognized and winners announced at an awards ceremony in Charlotte during the North Carolina Public Health Association's annual meeting.

The awards program, which is sponsored by the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, is intended to recognize and thank public health professionals for their innovative and creative approaches to the many health care needs of children and families, particularly those with low incomes.

This year's awards focus on outstanding collaborative programs that affect the health of children in all nomination categories. The awards, which include monetary grants, were presented in these categories:

- *The Lifetime Achievement Award*, given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to improving children's health services through a series of achievements, went to **Olson Huff, MD** (Black Mountain).
- *The Individual Recognition Awards*, given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to improving children's health services, went to **Amina Ahmed, MD**, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Carolinas Medical Center (Charlotte); **Beth Lamanna, WHNP, MPH, RN**, Clinical Assistant Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill School of Nursing and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Gillings School of Global Public Health (Chapel Hill); and **Robby Cahill, Michelle McDonald, DDS**, and **Christopher Dyer, DMD**, Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic (Cashiers).
- *Public Health Staff Recognition Awards* are given to full-time or part-time employees or retirees of local health departments in recognition of outstanding service in preventive health activities in their local communities. This year, they were presented to **Eric C. Nickens, Jr.**, Health Education Supervisor, Alamance County Health Department (Burlington); and **Kathleen Shapley-Quinn, MD**, Medical Director, Alamance County Health Department (Burlington); and **Gayle Olson**, Pediatric Asthma Care Manager, Albemarle Regional Health Services (Elizabeth City).
- *Local Health Department Recognition Awards* are made to departments that have developed innovative programs producing measurable, sustainable outcomes. They were awarded to **Catawba County Public Health Department** (Hickory) and the **New Hanover County Health Department** (Wilmington) for its Refugee Health Program, and the **Pitt County Health Department** (Greenville) for its Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

More information about the award winners follows.

## **Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient**

**Olson Huff, MD, FAAP**  
**Physician/Child Advocate**  
**Black Mountain, NC**

When Dr. Olson Huff finished serving as a flight surgeon in the United States Air Force, he could have practiced anywhere. Fortunately for North Carolina's children, he landed here and has spent more than three decades improving children's health as a consummate pediatric practitioner, an expert in both program and service system development and a tireless advocate. Dr. Huff introduced developmental medicine in the western part of the state, improving the lives of thousands of children with special needs. He was instrumental in the passage of NC Health Choice, the state's child health insurance program. Although he is retired, he never stops working for children, serving on many local, state and national boards and as a consultant to Mission Healthcare Foundation and the children's programs of The Duke Endowment.

## **Individual Recognition Award Recipients**

**Amina Ahmed, MD**  
**Associate Professor of Pediatrics**  
**Carolinas Medical Center**

Dr. Amina Ahmed, a pediatric infectious disease physician, collaborates with colleagues, local and state health departments and the Centers for Disease Control to treat children with tuberculosis and those at risk for the disease, many of whom are children of foreign-born parents without insurance. She took time off from her work to serve as director of the pediatric unit at a hospital in Haiti, after the earthquake. She also devotes part of her career to scholarly research.

**Beth Lamanna, BSN, MPH**  
**Clinical Assistant Professor**  
**UNC-Chapel Hill School of Nursing**  
**& Adjunct Assistant Professor**  
**Gillings School of Global Public Health**

When Beth Lamanna discovered a low lead testing rate for Medicaid-eligible children in Chatham County, she and her nursing students developed a survey, and evaluated data collected. Along with advisors from the NC Rural Communities Assistance Project and representatives from the Chatham County Health Department, Lamanna and her nursing students proposed new policy solutions—adopted by county officials—to improve testing rates and lower the level of lead exposure.

**Robby Cahill**  
**Christopher Dyer, DMD**  
**Michelle McDonald, DDS**  
**Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic**

While volunteering at the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, Robby Cahill noticed that many young people—in their 20s—were coming to the clinic with almost no savable teeth. They had no knowledge of basic dental care, and not only were resigned to eventually needing dentures, they also were at risk for coronary artery disease. Working with the Rotary Clubs of Cashiers and Highlands, Cahill, Dr. McDonald and Dr. Dyer created the Children's Dental Health Project to break the cycle of neglect and instill good dental habits in children and their families. The dentists provide screenings at schools, and also volunteer at the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic. The program includes a voluntary fluoride rinse supervised in schools by teachers, and an annual Dental Awareness Day that features "Tooth Fairies" to teach children good eating and dental hygiene habits.

## **Public Health Staff Recognition Award Recipients**

**Eric C. Nickens, Jr.**

**Health Education Supervisor**

**Alamance County Health Department**

Going to the dentist can be scary for young children, but not when they visit the Alamance-Caswell “Give Kids a Smile” mobile dental unit. In addition to getting a checkup and minor treatment, the young patients get to interact with “Dr. Brushwell,” have their faces painted, and leave with a backpack full of goodies donated by local businesses. Eric Nickens is the Alamance County Health Education Supervisor who makes this happen, and not only has he embraced Give Kids a Smile, he has notched up the program to make it a model throughout the state by adding a major component called “Adopt a Smile.” In this program, dentists agree to provide dental care free of charge to children in their private practices.

**Gayle Olson**

**Pediatric Asthma Care Manager**

**Albemarle Regional Health Services**

Gayle Olson is the driving force behind asthma management and care in the seven-county region served by Albemarle Regional Health Services. In her work as pediatric asthma care manager, she educates families about how to monitor asthma, react to problems and how to use medications correctly. She is a vital liaison between doctors, school nurses, day care providers and families.

**Kathleen Shapley-Quinn, MD**

**Medical Director**

**Alamance County Health Department**

Depression is tough on anyone and Dr. Kathleen Shapley-Quinn knows that it is even more critical to catch and treat depression in women while they are pregnant and after their babies are born. In her decade of serving as medical director of the Alamance County Health Department, Dr. Shapley-Quinn has taken steps to meet the mental health needs as well as the physical needs of low-income and minority women. She has called on experts at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine to help treat pregnant women and new moms who suffer from addiction, she has worked to reduce disparities in breastfeeding, and developed materials to train her employees about how to assess and treat psychiatric illness during the perinatal period.

## **Local Health Department Award Recipients**

**Catawba County Public Health**

For many years, children and adolescents in Catawba County received health services through the Child Health Clinic and Totally Teens Health Center. Shifts in funding and a desire to provide more continuity of care led to an expanded partnership with Catawba Pediatrics Associates (CPA), which had been serving the teen health center. Under the new arrangement, CPA provides health services to all child and teen patients of Catawba County Public Health. This allows the families and children to have a “medical home” where they can receive comprehensive health services as well as round-the-clock phone advice from registered nurses, emergency clinics on weekends and holidays, making healthcare more convenient and accessible.

**New Hanover County Health Department**

**Refugee Health Program**

Refugees typically flee their countries quickly to avoid persecution or other danger and arrive in the United States with few resources. When a refugee resettlement program was established in New Hanover County in 2010, the New Hanover County Health Department began collaborating with the Interfaith Refugee Ministry and St. James Episcopal Church to meet the medical and health needs of refugees being relocated there. The Health Department used its longstanding

relationship with the public school system to ensure that all refugee children receive necessary health and support services in the schools, and also established multiple programs and services, including Saturday outreach clinics. By giving refugee children a smooth transition into the community, this partnership is helping them and their families rebuild their lives.

**Pitt County Health Department  
Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

Pitt County health officials battled a new challenge when cases of suspected lead poisoning were traced to a water source in 2005. During that time, Pitt County had the first lead poisoning case ever in the state in which the only source of lead that could be found was water, rather than the usual culprit of deteriorated lead-based paint. When officials of the Health Department and the water utility held a joint news conference and issued a joint news release, they helped educate citizens about steps to take to ensure that their drinking water was safe. The lessons learned from that investigation and follow-up actions are likely to prevent lead poisoning cases in the future.

*The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation supports activities that help meet the educational and health needs of today's society and future generations. The Foundation focuses on programs that emphasize the understanding and application of health, science and education at all academic and professional levels. Visit the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation*

*Website:*

<http://us.gsk.com/html/community/community-grants-foundation.html>

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