

LEGISLATORS RECOGNIZED BY RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

On Wednesday, February 19, the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers recognized two members of the Majority as 2008 Legislators of the Year during a luncheon in the Capitol Tower. More than fifty of their members from all across Arizona were present for the awards given to Representative Nancy McLain and Representative Bob Stump, as well as Representative Manuel Alvarez.

Ms. McLain, R-Bullhead City, noted that she has several community health care facilities in her district. “These health care services are so vital to our rural areas,” explained the award winning legislator. She added, “A recent town hall in Flagstaff recognized the recruiting and retaining of health care professionals in rural health care as one of the top priorities for the state.”

Rep. McLain had made a special effort to work with the Arizona Medical Board to prioritize the license applications of doctors who have moved into Arizona to work in medically underserved areas.

The Arizona Association of Community Health Centers has been in operation for eighteen years, representing some 38 member organizations and more than 150 locations across the state. Tara Plese, Director of Government and Media Relations for AACHC presented the glass trophy to Ms. McLain, inscribed, “for her outstanding work on healthcare issues and unwavering support for Community Health Centers.”

Plese told the *Majority Memo*, “Representatives Stump and McLain always help us because they recognize the need for healthcare.”

She went on to explain, “With primary and prenatal healthcare taken care of in less expensive settings like community health centers, patients are kept out of emergency rooms.” The community centers serve everyone and charge patients a sliding scale fee.

The health centers provide medical, maternity, vision, radiology, dental, mental health, lab services and pharmacies to underserved populations. The centers even put clinics in some schools. Some clinics offer specialty care, internal medicine, or focus on pediatrics.

Joe Coatsworth, CEO of the Association, said, “We honor these three legislators that consistently help us provide medical care.”

In comments to the AACHC members, Rep. McLain explained, “I will be resisting cuts to rural healthcare.” But, in explaining the difficult

budget situation for this year, she added, “If we have to make cuts this year, I will be asking for more in future years.”

Rep. Bob Stump was recognized by AACHC for outstanding service to rural healthcare and community health centers during a luncheon on Feb. 19. Unfortunately, Mr. Stump was unable to attend the ceremony.



Rep. Nancy McLain addressed the members of AACHC after being recognized as 2008 Legislator of the Year by the healthcare organization.



An example of community health centers is the Lake Powell Medical Center, which was the first, federally funded, not-for-profit Canyonlands facility. It has been in operation since 1973. This facility is one of the nine centers under Canyonlands Community Health Care.