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2024 Community Health Champion Awardees announced

Western Wayne Family Health Centers (WWFHC) has recognized both an exceptional community leader and an exemplary organization with their 2024 Community Health Champion Award. The award is given to show appreciation for people and institutions that support the mission of keeping our community healthy and are leaders in supporting both health equity and access.

State Senator Sylvia Santana (D-Detroit) in her role as chair of the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee successfully shepherded the first Medicaid rate increase for Michigan's community health centers in many years. "Health centers around the state were facing a horrible situation—we are the safety net for one in 15 people in Michigan for primary care, dental and mental health services. Yet, we could not sustain and grow our clinics with the old reimbursement rates from Medicaid," says Linda Atkins, CEO. "Without the leadership of Senator Santana, centers around the state may have had to cut hours, reduce services or even cut positions." The 2024 Community Health Champion award is for this month's long effort that supports the health and wellbeing of people all over the state.

Wayne County Community College District's (WCCCD) Downriver Campus in Taylor is a hub for community activities that support health. These range from COVID-19 vaccine and testing clinics, supporting operations of health clinics and social service agencies with space for staff meetings and training, as well as hosting community educational events. Guadalupe Vivanco, COO and WWFHC, values this partnership. "The hospitality and sharing of space at the Downriver Campus is very important to us as we don't have enough space at our centers to hold all staff meetings. At WCCCD's Downriver Campus, we can not only have a big meeting, but also have smaller rooms to use for specialized trainings for our entire staff." The impact of this space is felt by many partner organizations too, and many people in the area were able to get vaccines and testing for COVID-19 as the WCCCD Downriver Campus quickly stepped up to open access to all. The 2024 Community Health Champion Award was presented to WCCCD's Downriver Campus President Andy Steeby and Dawn Piper, Campus Operations Associate.

Western Wayne Family Health Centers operates health center locations in Inkster, Taylor, Lincoln Park and Dearborn. Services include adult medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, general dentistry, behavioral health, psychiatry, addiction medicine, HIV prevention and services of community health workers. Established in 2006, WWFHC services almost 20,000 patients a year. Both insured and uninsured patients can access care.

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Photo 1: L to R: Guadalupe Vivanco, COO; Senator Sylvia Santana; Linda Atkins CEO, Yabreisy Evangelista-Cruz CFO

Photo 2: L to R: Guadalupe Vivanco, COO; Andy Steeby Campus President; Dawn Piper, Campus Operations Associate

We Keep Our Community Healthy