



Michigan Association of Health Plans

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Health Care Leaders Recognized by Michigan Association of Health Plans at Annual Conference

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LANSING, Mich.— State Sen. Mark Jansen, Rep. Kate Segal, Jeffrey Taylor of the Michigan Public Health Institute, Vernon K. Smith of Health Management Associates and Mark Saffer of Midwest Health Plan, Inc. were recognized for their contributions to health care issues at Michigan Association of Health Plans' 25th Annual Conference at Boyne Mountain Resort on July 18-20..

Sen. Jansen, a Republican from Gaines Township in Kent County, and Rep. Segal, a Democrat from Battle Creek, received the Legislator of the Year Award. Jansen and Segal were cited for their record of providing an open door to interested interests and for “demonstrated initiative and leadership in the support of issues consistent with MAHP’s mission of the promotion and advocacy of high quality, affordable, accessible health care for the citizens of Michigan.”

MAHP’s most prestigious award, the Ellis J. Bonner Outstanding Achievement Award, was given to Mark Saffer, president and CEO of Midwest Health Plan, Inc., with headquarters in Dearborn. Murdock told the award presentation audience that the award recognizes a MAHP member who has been nominated by colleagues based upon exemplary service, leadership and contributions to the managed care industry and community.

The late Ellis Bonner, a mentor and national leader in the health care industry, among many other contributions, was instrumental in developing the Minority Training Program for the Seattle-based Group Health Foundation.

Murdock cited Saffer as “a champion for various local programs to address cultural and racial disparities in health care,” and noted he and his company have “provided leadership and sponsorships for numerous culturally appropriate programs.”

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Vernon Smith, principal at Health Management Associates, a nationally recognized health care consulting and research firm headquartered in Lansing, received the Eugene Farnum Award, established in the name of the long-time past MAHP executive director, to honor those who reflect his values of collaboration, a sense of balance, fairness and integrity, in moving toward his vision of access to quality, affordable health care for Michigan citizens.

Jesse Thomas, president of Molina Health Care of Michigan, noted Smith's 30 years of public service as the Michigan Medicaid director and as budget director for the state's human service agencies, and his current work at Health Management Associates, where he is recognized as an expert on Medicaid, Medicare, state budgets and trends in the health care industry.

Jeff Taylor, executive director at the Michigan Public Health Institute, located in Okemos, received the MAHP President's Recognition Award. The discretionary award recognizes an individual or organization that has shown an outstanding commitment to the advancement and improvement in health care.

"For over 20 years, MPHI has worked to promote the health of Michigan citizens," noted MAHP President Dennis Smith in making the award. Smith, who is also president of the Upper Peninsula Health Plan, noted that the organization has grown from a staff of two to nearly 300, working on health information technology, planning and change implementation and research and evaluation.

The Michigan Association of Health Plans (MAHP) is an industry voice for 19 health care plans, covering over 2.1 million Michigan residents, and 45 businesses affiliated with the health care industry. MAHP facilitates communication among members, government, and the industry regarding health care issues of common concern.

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