BHS President David E. Phelps Honored for Leadership in Education Initiatives

Recognizing Berkshire Health Systems' innovative local approach to the national healthcare professional shortage, the Berkshire Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and Berkshire Community College (BCC), each used their keynote yearly events in 2008 to honor BHS President David E. Phelps for his leadership in developing and supporting a wide range of programs that have helped bring many new providers to the local system, and have also given current employees educational and financial support to pursue career advancement.

AHEC presented Phelps, BCC President Dr. Paul Raverta and Elms College President Dr. James Mullin with its Annual Achievement Awards. “These presidents brought their institutions together and found creative ways to add more nursing professors, produce more LPNs and associate degree RNs, and provided access to a bachelor’s degree RN program in Pittsfield. All three have provided the leadership to make the puzzle pieces fit for the health of the community.”

At its 2008 commencement, BCC honored Phelps with its President’s Award. BCC President Dr. Paul Raverta said: “This award is presented to President Phelps for his role in pioneering a new model of collaboration between a major healthcare provider and higher education in order to address a critical shortage of nurses and nursing faculty. I believe that this collaboration is unique within Massachusetts, and, perhaps, within the country. In any case, it is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when people come together to make a difference.”

Berkshire Medical Center is Ranked First in Massachusetts by HealthGrades for Overall Critical Care

BMC is ranked among the top 5% of hospitals in the nation and first in Massachusetts for overall pulmonary services.

National organizations that study the delivery of patient care in Intensive Care Units conclude that outcomes are significantly better when managed by intensivists — physicians with certification in their primary specialties, plus subspecialty certification in critical care medicine. “And we have five of them, which is just amazing,” said Michelle Franklin, RN, MSN, Clinical Manager of Critical Care Services at Berkshire Medical Center.

Among them is intensivist Jack K. Ringerl, MD, who said the foundation for extraordinary care was established by Ricardo Cordon, MD, the hospital’s first intensivist and Director of Pulmonary Medicine, who retired in 2006.

“Beginning with Dr. Cordon, we all witnessed the evolution of how world-class medical care should take place in a community hospital,” Dr. Ringerl said. “Because of the medical and administrative leadership at Berkshire Health Systems, the management of the sickest patients in this hospital has been exemplary.”

Now led by intensivist Daniel M. Doyle, MD, the ICU is distinguished by a close-knit team that has worked together for years, forging deep bonds and creating an atmosphere of trust that helps provide excellent patient care. Other hospital teams, including the Sepsis Team, help organize care to provide the best outcomes for patients.

“I don’t know if there is work that is too much harder than this,” Franklin said, referring to the non-stop pace of the ICU, and the skills needed to care for a combination of critically-ill surgical, medical and neurological patients. “They have to balance the deep empathy they feel for each patient with the need to somehow walk out of the unit at the end of the shift and resume their lives at home.”