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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

Celebrating Commitment and Success

HDNW's Jane Sundmacher helps turn vision into life-changing results

On April 11, Jane Sundmacher stood in Heritage Hall of the State Capitol in Lansing to receive the coveted Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion Award. To her surprise, she was also presented with the State of Michigan Special Tribute signed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, and Sen. Michele Hoyenga.

Immediately following the first presentation and photos, Sundmacher accepted a similar Michigan-shaped Jean Chabut award and a framed Special Tribute on behalf of the Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region (CHIR). The CHIR represents a 31-county collaboration that supports health and wellbeing of more than 800,000 residents by engaging residents, local health departments, healthcare providers, insurers, community organizations, and local government agencies to come together to identify and implement strategies that address community health priorities.

Sundmacher is the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) Director of Regional Planning and the Executive Director of the CHIR. Both sets of awards recognize a seven-year commitment to establishing and expanding the group.

The CHIR's results include improved health and safety, as well as lower healthcare costs regionally, which includes residents in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties.

One example of how the organization helps is shown when members began to notice a trend where people with established homes when entering a recovery program were homeless when released, creating stress at a vulnerable time. CHIR staff convened key partners and discovered that the organization providing rent assistance was not notified when the tenant entered treatment. A change in intake procedures created the key connection.

"It is with deep appreciation for the important work performed by the Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region that we join in celebrating its accomplishments by commemorating the organization's receipt of the Michigan Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion Award," the state tribute says. "The Northern Michigan CHIR's nomination is a testament to the impactful work it performs on behalf of Michiganders across Northern Michigan."

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

The Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion Award is a major part of Public Health Week in Michigan, which was celebrated April 9-15. This award is presented to individuals and/or organizations that have made significant contributions toward the health and well-being of Michigan citizens in the policy arena at the local and/or state level.

“I was not expecting to receive a Special Tribute signed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Senator Hoyenga at the MALPH Day at the Capitol,” Sundmacher says, noting to coworkers that she will bring the award and the tribute to an upcoming meeting to acknowledge their role in the CHIR’s outcomes. “We are so grateful for your vision and support of the CHIR. I share this award with all of you as well as the hundreds of residents and partners engaged in the CHIR.”

Cutline:

State Senator John Damoose congratulates Jane Sundmacher for receiving the Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion Award at Heritage Hall of the State Capitol April 11.

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