

Advocate Health's Carlson Recognized with WHA 2022 Distinguished Service Award

WHA has awarded its 2022 Distinguished Service Award to Pete Carlson, president of behavioral health services at Advocate Health. The award was presented to Carlson by WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital on March 14.

WHA's annual Distinguished Service Award honors a senior health care executive who has demonstrated a long-standing and impactful commitment to advancing health care statewide and in their community.

Carlson was nominated for the award by his Advocate Health colleagues Chief Operating Officer Bill Santulli, Chief Medical Group Officer Jeff Bahr, MD, and Vice-President of Behavioral Health Services Srikrishna Mylavarapu, MD.

Borgerding noted Carlson has been instrumental in transforming the way mental health care services are delivered in our communities.



Photo courtesy of Advocate Health

Pictured, L to R: Eric Borgerding, president and CEO, WHA; Bill Santulli, president, Advocate Health, Midwest Region; Pete Carlson, president of behavioral health services, Advocate Health; Dennis Potts, executive vice president, Advocate Health, Wisconsin Operations; Jessica Bauer, president, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital and Wisconsin Operations; Dr. Srikrishna Mylavarapu, vice president, Aurora Behavioral Health

"Among many examples that stand out, the one I am most familiar with, and grateful for, is the role Pete played in being the main

architect of Milwaukee County's new Mental Health Emergency Center," said Borgerding in presenting the award. "It's not easy to get competitors to agree on a plan, even when they share a goal of better serving their communities. But both in Milwaukee and at WHA in Madison, Pete won widespread respect for bringing together the county, the state and most critically the local health systems to bring this state-of-the-art new psychiatric hospital into reality."

Borgerding went on to say, "On behalf of anyone here, who either themselves or with a family member or loved one has struggled with or supported someone dealing with the immense, life-changing challenges of mental illness or addiction, on behalf of them and countless others, Pete, thank you for making such a difference in people's lives, and most importantly, giving them hope that things can be better."

In his letter nominating Pete for this award, Chief Operating Officer of Advocate Health Bill Santulli said, "When he first learned of the county's plan to close its decades old behavioral health center in Wauwatosa, Pete immediately sprang into action devising an alternative solution. So many people along the way warned him that executing a public-private partnership would be nearly impossible, but his commitment never wavered because 'it's the right thing to do for the community—we have to try.'"

All those who nominated Pete for this award noted his background as a social worker, and how that was evident in many of the decisions he makes as a health care administrator, and that guided by his mission to advocate for patients, he seamlessly balances clinical and administrative priorities.

Drs. Bahr and Mylavarapu wrote, "Pete doesn't complain about the challenges of his job. He uses the tools available to him and succeeds with what he has, and he has won the admiration of his colleagues both inside and outside Advocate Health as a result."

WHA congratulates Carlson for his exemplary commitment to expanding and improving access to behavioral health care in the community. WHA will make a \$500 donation to the charity of Carlson's choice.

Other Articles in this Issue

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- [GUEST COLUMN: Quality Health Care is Wisconsin Asset, But it Can't be Taken for Granted](#)
- [New Assembly Health Committee Chair Speaks to WHA's Public Policy Council](#)
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- [Advocate Health's Carlson Recognized with WHA 2022 Distinguished Service Award](#)