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David S. Buck, M.D., receives Public Health Award

AUSTIN, TEXAS — David S. Buck, M.D., M.P.H., of Houston, Texas, president and founder of Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston, was awarded the Public Health Award by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians during TAFP’s 63rd Annual Session and Scientific Assembly in Austin on July 14. The award recognizes individuals who are making extraordinary contributions to the public health of Texas.

Dr. Buck has shown leadership and advocacy of Houston’s homeless population since he first began working with the underserved 30 years ago. After graduating from the Colorado College in 1983, Dr. Buck traveled to Calcutta, India, to work with Mother Teresa caring for the poor. Seeing the broken systems of care in that region prompted him to pursue a master’s degree in public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston and then enroll as a medical student at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, where he currently serves as a family physician. He completed a family medicine residency at University of Rochester School of Medicine in Rochester, N.Y., a fellowship on addressing the health needs of the underserved at the University of California – San Diego, and a clinical scientist training program at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Buck currently serves as professor of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and as professor at the University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston.

In 1999, he founded Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston (HHH), a consortium of more than 30 community-based agencies, health care clinics, educational institutions, and public organizations working together to increase the quality of health care for the homeless. HHH started as a small two-exam-room medical clinic that served fewer than 2,000 people and has flourished into a federally qualified health center. In 2011, HHH served nearly 10,000 homeless men, women, and children by delivering primary health care, outreach initiatives, and supportive services. As head of the research team for HHH, Dr. Buck convened a consumer advisory board of homeless and formerly homeless individuals to incorporate homeless consumers into the leadership of the organization.

Dr. Buck supervises the Houston Outreach Medicine Education and Social Services (HOMES) track that allows third-year medical students to earn credit by working at the HOMES Clinic, a student-managed clinic he founded with a former medical student that is sponsored by HHH. Other academic

achievements include the development of the practice of goal negotiated care as part of homeless medical care, which he has presented nationally and internationally.

In the last year, the Government Accountability Office appointed him to the 15-member Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP) Program Advisory Board. Dr. Buck, along with the other board members, will make recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services on grants and loans to establish nonprofit, member-run health insurers serving the individual and small-group markets. The board was created as a part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

He serves on multiple local and national boards working to progress underserved and homeless medical care, and has received numerous awards for his work. He is on the National Healthcare for the Homeless Network's Research Coordinating Council. He currently serves on the board of a county nonprofit, the Harris County Healthcare Alliance, which is working to develop a health care system for the underserved through evidenced-based practices from systems outcomes measures. He also serves on the board of three national organizations: the Street Medicine Institute (as chair), the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, and Healthcare for Special Populations.

The Texas Academy of Family Physicians is the premier membership organization dedicated to uniting the family doctors of Texas through advocacy, education and member services, and empowering them to provide a medical home for patients of all ages. It has 33 local chapters and is a chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Visit www.tafp.org for more information.