

Award: Harry J. Baker Community Service Award
Recipient: Promise Healthcare Transition Board of Directors
Presenters: Lisa Dixon

Good evening. Again, my name is Lisa Dixon, and I am the Chair of the Health Care Consumers Board of Directors.

I would like to ask the representatives of the Promise Healthcare Transition Board of Directors to please come up and join me on stage.

I am honored to be able to present the Harry J. Baker Community Service Award to the individuals and organizations who served on the Promise Healthcare Transition Board of Directors until the new operational Board that governs Frances Nelson was formed.

The Harry J. Baker Award is intended to honor community members or organizations whose dedication and work toward improving the lives of people in our community exemplifies community service of the highest level.

Tonight, we are honoring a group of individuals and their organizations who got together on an intentionally temporary (but arduous) basis for a few months last year to do the work necessary for our community to have local ownership and governance of Frances Nelson Health Center, in order to expand access to care.

As we told you at last year's Annual Awards Dinner, there was a huge community collaboration underway to improve access to care for the medically underserved in our community. A coalition of organizations, including the United Way of Champaign County, Carle, Covenant, Health Care Consumers, Land of Lincoln, SmileHealthy, and several others, got together to try to figure out how to do this.

They came to the conclusion that the first step for improving access to care in our community would be to expand the capacity of Frances Nelson Health Center to serve the medically underserved. There was tremendous potential there, but unlocking the potential meant gaining ownership and local governance of Frances Nelson Health Center so it could better meet the community's needs. Local ownership and governance would also pave the way for more successful collaborations with other local organizations to make the full range of health care, mental health, and dental services available to current and future Frances Nelson patients.

Once the coalition made their decision, a new organization had to be formed, led by a Transition Board of Directors. Several organizations and their representatives stepped

up for what would become a tedious, legal, technical, exasperating, exhausting, and thankless, but heroic task. Promise Healthcare was formed, thanks to these individuals and organizations.

The Promise Healthcare Transition Board set out to do the job of negotiating to purchase Frances Nelson Health Center from the Decatur Community Health Improvement Center, and also laying all the groundwork to make sure the new organization, and its operating Board, would meet all of the federal requirements that govern Federally Qualified Health Centers like Frances Nelson.

To accomplish this, this is what the organizations did:

They contributed funds to hire consultants to guide them along the way.

They gave a lot of their time – a lot! This group of individuals met WEEKLY from April 18, 2012 through August 6, 2012. That is sixteen weekly meetings, with lots of work in between the meetings.

They contributed meeting space. The United Way of Champaign County hosted many of the meetings. And the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation also provided meeting space and teleconference technology, even for three months after the Transition Board finished its task and the new Promise Healthcare operating Board was formed.

We will never know all of the work that they had to do. But we know it involved legal and financial negotiations with the Decatur organization; negotiations with the federal government; developing and adopting about a million different policies and procedures required by the federal government; finding the right mix of individuals to meet the federal requirements to serve on the operating Board for Frances Nelson, and getting them ready to serve when the time came; and, you may recall, dealing with public and media perceptions – and misperceptions – of what was going on with Frances Nelson.

In a few short months, that I'm sure felt endless at times, without any fanfare, this group accomplished its mission!

Before I introduce you to the individuals and organizations who served on the Promise Healthcare Transition Board of Directors, I want to tell you that they would be the first to say that they could not have accomplished their mission without the extraordinary work by two key individuals who served as paid staff during this time. These individuals are Nancy Greenwalt, the Executive Director and fearless leader of Promise Healthcare, and Deb Frank Feinen, who served as the attorney for Promise Healthcare. We also wish to thank them for their service.

Now, please join me in recognizing the volunteers who served on the Promise Healthcare Transition Board of Directors until their mission was accomplished. Several of them could not be here this evening, but as I call your name, please wave your hand so people know who you are. They are:

- Mark Ballard, BankChampaign, served as President (not able to be here)
- Lynne Barnes, Carle Foundation
- Cathy Emanuel, Presence Covenant Medical Center (not able to be here)
- Lyn Jones, formerly of United Way, now with Carle
- Beverley Baker, representing the United Way of Champaign County, who provided extraordinary leadership and helped organize this effort
- Valerie McWilliams, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation (not able to be here)
- Paulette Colemon, CCHCC, served as Vice President
- Jen Tayabji, CCHCC, and
- Claudia Lennhoff, CCHCC, served as Secretary/Treasurer

It is my great honor to recognize your service with the Harry J. Baker Community Service Award. Thank you all for your extraordinary work!