2012 Francis C. Moore, MD Journalism Awards

Harris County Medical Society and Houston Academy of Medicine Honor Local Media for Excellent Medical Reporting

Pictured left to right on the back row are: HAM President Elizabeth Torres, MD; Greg Groogan (Fox TV 26); Mark Muller (Fox TV 26); Jon Hill (KPRC TV 2); Brian Sasser (KPRC 2); Steve Jansen (Houston Press); Jose Grinan (Fox TV 26); and HCMS President Keith A. Bourgeois, MD. On the middle row are left to right: Allison Wollam (Houston Business Journal); Ronda Wendler (Texas Medical Center News); Carrie Feibel (KUHF Houston Public Radio); and Emily Akin (Fox TV 26). On the first row is Ray Ramirez (Fox TV 26).

Francis C. Moore, MD, Medical Journalism Award Winners:

Category of Medical Economics

An Award of Merit went to Allison Wollam, Houston Business Journal, for “Bad Medicine? Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas Cuts Houston Reimbursement Rates.” The goal of this story was to inform the public about the troubles area physicians were having in some of their business dealings.

An Award of Excellence went to Allison Wollam, Houston Business Journal, for “Doctors Brace for Severe Medicare Cuts, Some Ready to Pull the Plug.” The goal of this story was to inform the public about the annual struggle local physicians have at the end of each year when threatened with steep Medicare reimbursement cuts. Instead of writing the typical Medicare story, Ms. Wollam interviewed several doctors about how they dealt with the constant threat of Medicare cuts and how they developed their business plans each year around unknown reimbursements for Medicare patients.

Category of Periodicals, Medical/Health News Story

An Award of Merit went to Steve Jansen and Gus Garcia-Roberts, Houston Press, for their story, “Knocked Out.” The journalists illustrated the negative impact concussions can have on children. The story brought awareness of the dangers of concussions in children and new Texas legislation that requires coaches of young athletes to complete an online course to aid in recognizing when a child has a concussion.

An Award of Excellence went to Ronda Wendler, Texas Medical Center News, for her story, “Surgical Tool Removes Brain Tumors through the Nose.” The goal of this story was to inform readers of a new method of surgery that allows physicians to gain access to brain tumors through the nostril. This method does not require heat, which can damage delicate tissues. This article was featured on St. Luke’s Web site and was used as a starting place for Associated Press and CNN stories.

Category of Radio, Medical/Health Story

An Award of Excellence went to Carrie Feibel, KUHF Houston Public Radio, for “Heart with No Beat Offers Hope of New Lease on Life.” This story discussed the development of an artificial heart without a pulse. The story does not simply discuss the technological advancement in cardiac care but discusses how two physicians approached the problem in a new way with a new paradigm, which has cultural implications for us all. This artificial heart spins the blood forward at a constant flow rate instead of pulsing. The story aired nationally on NPR’s Morning Edition and became the network’s most frequently emailed story and received more than 26,000 Facebook postings.

Category of Radio, Medical/Health Series

An Award of Merit went to Carrie Feibel, KUHF Houston Public Radio, for “Texas Health Care and Affordable Care Act: Is the System Ready for Change?” This series discussed the challenges of the Affordable Care Act by breaking it up into three parts. The first part examined how the overburdened local safety net (Harris County Hospital District clinics) will handle the influx of new patients. The second part examined how Medicaid
is changing in Texas. The third part discussed the medical loss ratio, which is defined as how much the insurance company spends on actual medical care. The Medicaid section aired on 35 stations in Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma. The first and third parts were aired nationally on NPR.

**Category of Television, Medical/Health News Story**

Award of Merit went to Brian Sasser and Jon Hill, KPRC TV Channel 2, for “Walk on, Sean.” This story spotlighted the medical research of Dr. Kurt Mossberg and his team at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, who are helping patients who have traumatic brain injuries communicate with their muscles again. The story profiled Sean Carter, who was left unable to walk or talk after being a passenger in a truck involved in a drunk driving accident. After undergoing special physical therapy, Sean can now walk again. This story touched many lives. After airing, Sean received invitations to visit schools, churches and civic groups to bring dual awareness of the dangers of drunk driving and possibilities of physical therapy for those who have traumatic brain injuries.

An Award of Excellence went to Greg Groogan and Mark Muller, KRIV TV Fox 26, for “The Worthy and the Willing.” In this story, they brought awareness to the need for kidney donors and how one person can make a staggering impact on many.

**Category of Television, Medical/Health News Series**

An Award of Merit went to José Griñán and Ray Ramirez, KRIV TV Fox 26, for “Signs of Stroke.” In this series, Mr. Griñán told a personal story of having a stroke and the warning signs he experienced so that others could benefit. After the stories aired, Mr. Griñán received many personal calls from those who said the information saved their life or a life of someone they loved.

An Award of Excellence went to Emily Akin and Matt Matejka, KRIV TV Fox 26, for “Women be Aware.” This five-part series examined the medical and emotional consequences women face when they neglect their health. What medical issues do women face as they age? What are the statistics behind heart attacks, cancers and strokes? How does a woman’s health decision impact her family? Ms. Akin interviewed a cross section of women and physicians from different medical disciplines, provided research and trends, and gathered women on a panel to share their experiences. This series increased women’s health awareness to be proactive about their health.

The Harris County Medical Society, established in 1903, is the professional organization for physicians in Harris County. It is the largest county medical society in the nation with a membership of more than 11,000 physicians and medical students. Its mission is to be the leading advocate for member physicians, their patients and the community, in promoting the highest standards of ethical medical practice, access to quality medical care, medical education, research, and community health. The Houston Academy of Medicine is the charitable and educational arm of the Medical Society.