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Doctor wins state health care quality award

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A Lexington doctor has been named an inaugural recipient of Community Care of North Carolina's Health Care Quality award.

Dr. Stephen Hsieh, whose practice is at High Rock Internal Medicine on West Medical Park Drive, was one of 10 winners across the state honored by the 25-year-old organization.

Hsieh, who has practiced at his current location since 1998, said the award came as a surprise to him.

"I was completely shocked," he said. "I had no idea I was even in the running."

According to CCNC, the awards are designed to recognize exceptional performance in a variety of categories, including patient service and education, health care analytics, effective collaboration on a multi-disciplinary team and improving access to care in rural areas.

Hsieh reasons the award may have come his way because: "I understand that caring for Medicaid patients is a challenging task, and I have embraced the challenge of trying to provide quality care for them."

Dr. L. Allen Dobson Jr., president and CEO of CCNC, indicated as much in a statement released after announcement of the awards.

"We are proud to honor people who work hard each day to improve the quality of care for their patients," Dobson said. "These award recipients demonstrate exemplary dedication to caring for North Carolina's needy populations and have made their local communities better places to live. CCNC wishes to recognize the tremendous efforts being made by local care managers and participating practices. It's clear that exceptional health care delivery is happening in cities and towns all across our state."

Hsieh said rather than just tolerating the difficulty of negotiating the Medicaid system, "I actually sought ways to improve care."

He noted most Medicaid patients have poor social support structures and are generally sicker because some health care providers shy away from treating them.

CCNC claims it matches each patient with a primary care provider or medical home to manage and coordinate care whereby data is used to target care management interventions for high-risk, chronically ill patients.

About 90 percent of North Carolina's primary care providers participate in CCNC, and it has a presence in every hospital across the state, according to the



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Dr. Stephen Hsieh stands in an examination room at High Rock Internal Medicine on West Medical Park Drive. Hsieh has been chosen as one of 10 recipients for Community Care of North Carolina's 2014 Health Care Quality Awards to be awarded in Raleigh.

organization's website. CCNC boasts it ranks in the top 10 percent of health plans for managing diabetes, asthma and heart disease. Its work with Medicaid patients has saved the state nearly \$1 billion over a four-year period, according to CCNC's statistics

In a news release, CCNC stated that nominations were reviewed by a distinguished panel of judges, including Dr. Robin Cummings, state Medicaid director; N.C. Department of Health and Human Services; CCNC Central Office leadership; and CCNC Network leaders.

The North Carolina Community Care Networks board of directors will recognize recipients during an awards luncheon Dec. 3 in Raleigh.

The CCNC's website can be accessed at www.communitycarenc.com.

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