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**Irene Shepherd, CRNP, CPNP-PC, Pediatric Provider and Chief Medical Officer at Community Health & Dental Care  
Receives  
2023 APEX – Outstanding Primary Care Clinician Award at PACHC Annual Conference**

Pottstown – Community Health & Dental Care, Inc. (CHDC) congratulates pediatric provider and Chief Medical Officer, Irene Shepherd, CRNP, CPNP-PC, for receiving the 2023 APEX – Outstanding Primary Care Clinician Award at the 2023 Annual Pennsylvania Association for Community Health Centers (PACHC) Conference event held October 10 – 12<sup>th</sup> at the Lancaster Marriott in Lancaster, PA.

The Outstanding Primary Care Clinician Award is presented to an individual or team whose work has made a significant contribution in the delivery of primary care to vulnerable populations, thereby improving quality, accessibility and/or outcomes of care. This award was open to all health care professionals serving in the medical, dental, or behavioral health and substance abuse arenas.

*"It is vital to recognize over forty years the amount of work, passion, blood, sweat and tears Irene devoted her life to making each patient's life a better one." says Bridgette McGivern, CEO of Community Health & Dental Care. She goes on to say, "Irene has exemplified passion for primary care since she began as a staff nurse over forty years ago because she has the patience and passion to help every patient needing primary care across clinical disciplines."*

Since 1981, Ms. Shepherd has been providing primary pediatric care for over 40 years and started out as a staff nurse at Children's hospital of Philadelphia providing care to infants and toddlers with various acute, chronic care and critically ill conditions to countless pediatric patients of all ages in various medical and surgical units. In 1989, Ms. Shepherd worked her way to Pottstown Memorial Medical center as a neonatal staff nurse providing care and working with parents with limited resources to support the critically ill infants awaiting transportation, teaching, and supporting parents, and providing well baby care.

Ms. Shepherd never lost sight of improving primary care delivery and quality improvement initiatives while growing her career and worked as a Nurse Interviewer at Boston University for a multi-center epidemiologic study. During the five-year project, Ms. Shepherd spent time interviewing new mothers of healthy and malformed infants to maintain quality control, computer data coding, and most importantly improve communications with other members of the study.

Pursuing her passion for pediatric primary care, Ms. Shepherd spent the first two years at a Pediatric practice in Exeter during her ten years at the Reading Hospital Clinic. Ms. Shepherd provided care consisting of well visits, including complete history and physical examination, health screenings including EPSDT and Denver Developmental screenings, and extensive family teaching regarding normal childhood issues and preventative health measures; treatment of acute and chronic illnesses; and ordering and interpretation of diagnostic tests.

Devoting her expertise and life to serving the underserved population, Ms. Shepherd expanded her career to the Lehigh Valley Medical Center in Allentown and, in 2008, she became a Pediatric Provider at Pottstown Clinic. In 2010, the Pottstown Clinic became Community Health and Dental Care (CHDC) as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) look-a-like and received the full Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) designation in 2012, enabling CHDC to

grow the pediatric department and adding resources such as a free transportation program, WIC services on-site, case management and behavioral health support for pediatric patients and their families with Ms. Shepherd's support. In 2018, Ms. Shepherd was promoted to CHDC's Chief Medical Officer and today, has improved primary care delivery for not only pediatrics but for all 45,000 registered CHDC patients of all ages regardless of insurance status.

For more information or to become a new patient of CHDC, please call 610-326-9460 and our friendly staff will assist you or visit [www.ch-dc.org](http://www.ch-dc.org).

### **About Community Health & Dental Care**

Since 2008, Community Health & Dental Care ensures access to appropriate levels of care for all people in the service area regardless of their ability to pay. CHDC has qualified, caring staff to assist you and your family to become a patient of a true medical and dental home.

CHDC provides medical, dental, OBGYN, vision, podiatry, physical therapy, medication assistance therapy (MAT), integrated behavioral health, care and case management, and free transportation to and from all CHDC health center locations in Pottstown and Barto. For time savings and convenience, multiple appointments can be scheduled so patients can possibly have dental, vision and/or medical appointments scheduled for the same day- for all your one stop healthcare needs!

We accept most major Commercial, Medicare and Medicare supplement plans, Fee for Service Medicaid and Managed Care Medicaid plans and provide a health care discount for eligible uninsured and underinsured patients. For qualified patients receiving a 100% healthcare discount, the nominal fee for a medical/behavioral health/vision visit is \$20, \$35 for a dental visit and \$5 for a prescription! CHDC can offer the health care discount because we receive annual funding from our Federal partner, HRSA, since 2012 as a designated Federally Qualified Health Center.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact us at 610-326-9460, email us at [info@ch-dc.org](mailto:info@ch-dc.org) or visit our website at [www.ch-dc.org](http://www.ch-dc.org).

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(Photo l-r: Irene Shepherd, CRNP, CPNP-PC, pediatric provider and Chief Medical Officer with Bridgette McGivern, MBA, CEO)