

On June 29, the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) and the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF) hosted a ceremony at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Learning Center in Washington, DC to celebrate innovation in interprofessional engagement

“On behalf of IPEC and COF, it is my pleasure to recognize Dr. Meg Zomorodi and the collaborators at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers as the recipients of the 2023 Excellence in Interprofessional Education (IPE) Collaboration Award,” said U.S. Public Health Service Rear Admiral (retired) Randall J.F. Gardner, PE, FSAME. “The Rural Interprofessional Initiative (RIPHI) has had far-reaching impacts on improving public health and supporting our future workforce and high quality education.”

“We’re truly humbled by this recognition and honor,” said Dr. Zomorodi. “Our institutions are committed to serving the needs of rural and underserved areas in North Carolina. RIPHI is a true ‘win-win’ for our students, partners, and all those we serve.”

The IPEC Membership Meeting and IPEC/COF Award Ceremony also featured poster presentations by honorable mention finalists. All honorees were recognized for their innovative and transformative solutions to improve the health of their communities. To be eligible, projects had to demonstrate a clear connection between interprofessional practice, outcomes, and impact.

“It was great to recognize the work of these teams and pioneers,” said Alison J. Whelan, MD, IPEC Board Chair and AAMC Chief Education Officer. “It’s challenging work that is pivotal to the future of health care and education. I congratulate each of the awardees for working tirelessly on our shared mission of advancing IPE and equity.”

The complete list of the 2023 winners follows:

**2023 IPEC COF Award: Overall Winner**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), Chapel Hill, NC  
*The Rural Interprofessional Health Initiative (RIPHI) and Carolina Student Services Corps*  
Meg Zomorodi, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN, UNC School of Nursing  
Hugh Tilson, JD, MPH, North Carolina Area Health Education Centers  
Amir Barzin, DO, MS, Carolina Together Testing Program  
Amanda Gabbard, MS, UNC Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice

**2023 IPEC COF Honorable Mention: Health Communications and Health Technology**

Florida State University (FSU), Tallahassee, FL  
*Using Simulation for Skill Building in Teams: Modified Use of Simulation in Teams for Students in Training*  
*(MUST-SIT) Together©: An Interprofessional Education (IPE) model*  
Debra A. Danforth, DNP, APRN, RN, FAANP, FSU College of Medicine  
Niharika Suchak, MBBS, MHS, FACP, AGSF, FSU College of Medicine  
Benjamin J. Smith, DMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA, FSU College of Medicine

**2023 IPEC COF Honorable Mention: Behavioral Health**

University of Mary, Bismarck, ND  
*Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Student IPE Community Project*

Michelle Keller, PT, MPT, CEEAA, EdD, University of Mary Saint Gianna School of Health Sciences

Jennifer Schroeder, OTD, OTR/L, University of Mary Saint Gianna School of Health Sciences

**2023 IPEC COF Honorable Mention: Public Health Infrastructure**

University of Georgia (UGA), Athens, GA

*Modeling Collaborative Interprofessional Care through a Mass Outbreak Simulation*

Timothy R. Brown, PharmD, BCACP, FASHP, UGA College of Pharmacy

Beth McLearn, RN, DNP, FNP-C, ACNP-BC, Augusta University College of Nursing

José F. Cordero, MD, MPH, FAAP, UGA College of Public Health

Kay Brooks, MEd, RPh, UGA College of Pharmacy

**2023 IPEC COF Honorable Mention: Community Empowerment and Education**

University of South Dakota (USD), Vermillion, SD

*Child and Adult Advocacy Studies Interprofessional Simulation*

Shana Cerny, MS, OTD, USD School of Health Sciences Department of Occupational Therapy

Kelly Bass, PhD, DSW, MSW, CSW-PIP, USD School of Health Sciences Department of Social Work

Carrie Sanderson, JD, MPA, USD Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment

**2023 IPEC COF Honorable Mention: At Risk and Vulnerable Communities**

University at Buffalo (UB), Buffalo, NY

*University at Buffalo's Lighthouse Clinic: Reducing Barriers to Care and the Impact of Social Determinants of Health*

Jessica S. Kruger, PhD, MCHES, UB School of Public Health and Health Professions

Todd Sage, PhD, MSW, UB School of Social Work

William Blymire, Jr., MD, UB Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

"This cycle, we received the second highest number of applications – only surpassed by the award's inaugural year in 2017. We would like to thank everyone for their engagement and outstanding submissions," noted Lieutenant Commander Kodilichi Echeozo, PharmD, MBA, BCPS, BCACP. "We're also proud to share that we assembled our largest and most interprofessional review team ever to assess these applications."

"A special thanks to our PHS colleagues for their expertise and assistance with this year's award program. We hope that the trend of increasing applications continues, and that more schools and programs share their exemplary work that will be shared with leaders across the health professions," added IPEC Associate Director Shelley McKearney.

The 2024 award cycle will open in September 2023. For additional details about the honorees and the submission process, visit IPEC's [website](#).