



TENNESSEE PRIMARY CARE
ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE
may 7, 2009

**Tennessee Primary Care Association Honors Tennessee's Health Care Leaders with 2009
TPCA Awards of Excellence**
Johnson City Clinic Awarded for Serving the Homeless

Knoxville, TN— Representatives from the Tennessee Primary Care Association presented four annual Awards of Excellence to health care leaders last week at their 33rd Annual Conference. The Johnson City Downtown Clinic and Day Center was awarded the Charles E. Darling Award of Excellence for exhibiting innovation and dedication to the delivery of primary care to vulnerable populations in the area.

This award, named in honor of Dr. Charles E. Darling, recognizes outstanding achievement in organizing, delivering, and/or financing health services to vulnerable populations. Dr. Darling dedicated his life to serving the prenatal health needs of women in East Tennessee, regardless of their ability to pay.

The Johnson City Downtown Clinic has been providing care to the uninsured, underinsured, and homeless since 1990. Over the past few years the clinic has expanded into two sites to serve the health care needs of their disparate patients and to serve the social and mental health needs of the homeless. As the clinic grew in its service to meet the needs of the uninsured, underinsured, marginalized, and migrant patients, the homeless felt abandoned as the clinic moved into a new space. The administrative team of the clinic took the opportunity to meet with the owners of the old clinic space and secured it for a very reasonable lease fee.

The Day Center has become the only place in the community for the homeless to have shelter during day-time hours. The Day Center is a hive of activity every day as the homeless use the Center's address to receive their mail, access to showers and laundry facilities, and a case-manager who works with them to navigate governmental processes and mental health services. Utilization has increased from 700 visits in 2007 to over 1,000 in 2008. A nurse practitioner is also available to meet their health needs two days a week on site and daily at the Downtown Clinic.

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Connecting Communities Who Care

Tennessee Primary Care Association (TPCA) is a nonprofit corporation connecting Tennesseans with a health care home, especially the medically underserved. Since its inception in 1976, TPCA committed to 1) identifying unmet needs and gaps in service access, 2) developing systems of care, 3) advocating for resources, and 4) promoting awareness of Community Health Centers. Membership includes nonprofit primary care clinics across the state operating over 140 sites providing comprehensive medical care.