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## **Three visionary health care executives, a behavioral health organization and an entrepreneur to receive awards at GDAH Salute! to Healthcare on Nov. 5**

*The architects of the Beaumont, Botsford and Oakwood health systems merger to highlight an evening with the most powerful, diverse group of health care stakeholders in one place, hosted by the region's non-profit health collaborative*

**DETROIT (October 13, 2015)** – Next month, during its annual Salute! to Healthcare, the Greater Detroit Area Health Council (GDAH) will present awards to individuals and organizations that have transformed health care in southeast Michigan.

The GDAH Salute! to Healthcare honorees will be **Brian Connolly**, retired president and CEO of Oakwood Healthcare, **Paul LaCasse**, D.O., current executive vice president of post-acute division at Beaumont Health and former president and CEO of Botsford Health Care, and **Gene Michalski**, retired president and CEO of Beaumont Health System for leading the state's largest health care merger; the **Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority (DWMHA)** for work toward transforming behavioral health; and SynBella founder and CEO **Cassie Sobelton** for leading innovative employee wellness programs. They will receive their awards during a dinner ceremony on Thursday, November 5, 2015, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center.

"Since 2012, we've honored health care leaders whose efforts have increased access to care, improved the quality of care and managed the cost of care," said GDAH president and CEO **Kate Kohn-Parrott**. "This year's Salute! to Healthcare honorees represent the changing landscape of health care in our region. These visionaries have seen gaps in care and opportunities to improve the health and well-being of the people who live, work, play and pray in southeast Michigan, by affecting change."

The visionary executives from Beaumont, Botsford and Oakwood who joined with their respective board of directors to form Beaumont Health will receive the Symond R. Gottlieb Award at the GDAH 2015 Salute! to Healthcare. In honor and memory of Sy Gottlieb, a former GDAH executive director, this award is presented to individuals who have dedicated their work to significantly improving quality, access and delivery of health care. Through their individual and shared efforts, Connolly, LaCasse and Michalski have far exceeded the intention of the award.

Connolly recently retired as the Oakwood Healthcare president and CEO following the merger of Beaumont, Botsford and Oakwood. He was the chief transition executive during the merger. Connolly has numerous contributions to health care in the southeast Michigan region and to the health care delivery system in America. He had the vision and foresight for Oakwood to partner with Beaumont and Botsford in a merger that will impact the health and wellbeing of southeast Michigan for decades to come. Connolly is a member of the GDAH board executive committee and a past board chair, advocating for its programs to increase access to care, improve the quality of care and manage the cost of care.

LaCasse was the former president and CEO of Botsford Health Care prior to the merger. He is currently executive vice president of post-acute division at the new Beaumont Health. His contributions to health care the region are extensive, most notably increasing access to quality care for families in Oakland and Wayne counties. LaCasse had the far-reaching vision that crafting a merger with Beaumont and Oakwood will further improve care and increase access to care while managing the cost of care. As a GDAH board member, his insights and advocacy are instrumental to the regional health collaborative.

## Three visionary health care executives, a behavioral health organization and an entrepreneur to receive awards at GDAHC Salute! to Healthcare on Nov. 5 -continued-

Michalski was the president and CEO of Beaumont Health System prior to the merger and became the first president and CEO of the new organization, Beaumont Health. He retired in June 2015. Michalski's unwavering leadership to ensure Beaumont Health System provided the best quality care in the region is undeniable, while possessing the vision to understand that even a large health system will be more viable and stronger with local partners, Botsford and Oakwood. He is a former GDAHC board member, including a former member of the executive committee, who continues to advocate for its programs.

DWMHA will receive the Eagle Visionary Leadership Award at the GDAHC 2015 Salute! to Healthcare. This award honors the contributions and achievements of an organization in southeast Michigan that has made steady progress in advancing a health care issue of quality, access or cost.

**Tom Watkins**, president and CEO of DWMHA, will accept the Eagle Visionary Leadership Award on behalf of the organization at the ceremony. A former department of Wayne County government, DWMHA became an independent authority two years ago. Since 2013, DWMHA has integrated substance use disorder programs into its organization that also oversees services for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities. It has collaborated with providers to increase access to behavioral health services in Wayne County, and leads an educational campaign to de-stigmatize mental health.

Sobelton will be the first honoree to receive the Breakthrough Award at the GDAHC 2015 Salute! to Healthcare. The award honors an individual or organization for their impact on the health and well-being of southeast Michigan through community engagement and innovation.

Sobelton founded SynBella to reduce health care costs for corporate employers, while improving the health, happiness and overall quality of employees' lives. Through her work, she has influenced change and improvement in health care by finding unique and resourceful ways to implement preventive measures in the business community employee population. Sobelton's expertise, displayed in frequent television appearances and social media influence, touches an important spectrum of health care that is necessary to address whole-person care.

The GDAHC Salute! to Healthcare is being made possible by Priority Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network, Health Alliance Plan (HAP), Conifer Insurance Company, Conway MacKenzie, Henry Ford Health System, Humana, Integrated Care Alliance, Med-Share Mobile Diagnostic Imaging, and the University of Michigan Health System.

WJBK-FOX 2's anchor and reporter **Roop Raj** will emcee the GDAHC 2015 Salute! to Healthcare dinner awards ceremony on Thursday, November 5 at 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Tickets are available for \$125 for GDAHC members and \$150 for future GDAHC members. Table sponsorship is \$1200. Tickets and tables may be purchased at [www.GDAHC.org](http://www.GDAHC.org).

### ABOUT THE GREATER DETROIT AREA HEALTH COUNCIL

The Greater Detroit Area Health Council (GDAHC) is southeast Michigan's premier health care collaborative. It leverages multi-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration to develop and evaluate innovative ways to improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in southeast Michigan. As a health care leader for more than 70 years – recognized nationally and regionally – GDAHC represents everyone who gets care, gives care and pays for care. Dedicated to the cost-effective allocation, management and use of health care resources, the non-profit collaborative seeks to develop strong, strategic partnerships that increase access to care, improve the value, and manage the cost of health. Visit [www.gdahc.org](http://www.gdahc.org) to learn more.