



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbia Valley Community Health Board President Honored with Advocacy Award

Rich Watson was awarded the 2013 Betsey K. Cooke Grassroots MVP Award

Tuesday, April 9, 2013: Wenatchee, WA: Rich Watson, President of the Board of Directors of [Columbia Valley Community Health](#), was awarded the **Elizabeth K. Cooke Advocacy MPV Award** by the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) (NACHC) on Thursday, March 21, 2013. Watson was presented with this award at the 38th Annual NACHC Policy and Issues Forum in Washington, D.C., an event attended by more than 2,000 health center leaders from around the country.

Watson was one of ten health care leaders to receive the award that honors the dedicated efforts of health care advocates in generating public and political support around America's Health Centers. With demand for health centers like Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH) growing among our country's medically underserved and uninsured, initiatives that support and strengthen their mission and sustainability is critical. The committed efforts of advocates like Watson help to make this key support possible at local, state, and national levels.

The NACHC Advocacy staff responsible for the award nominations stated that Watson "has pushed to make advocacy a priority at his health center as well as having worked hard to personally develop his relationship with Washington members of Congress." In February, Watson received an invitation from U.S. Representative Dave Reichert of the Eighth District to serve on his state-wide Health Care Advisory Committee.

Watson downplays the national attention surrounding the award and refocuses what drives his advocacy – supporting the critical work being done at CVCH.

"When I began serving on the board in 2006, Columbia Valley Community Health was operating totally under the radar," Watson says. "It was frustrating because this clinic was doing really good things and making a huge impact in our community, yet nobody knew about us or they had misconceptions about who we were."

CVCH is a growing primary care medical home that serves over 25,000 patients a year in Chelan and Douglas counties. "That's a quarter of the population," Watson points out "but people still think of us as the small migrant clinic that doesn't take insurance."

Watson says community health centers like CVCH are significant players that fill an important role in their communities yet they are viewed as the bottom of health care.

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CVCH Press Release: CVCH Board Chair Receives MVP Award from NACHC

“In the totality of the health care system, CVCH is providing quality care that follows an efficient delivery model and saves millions of dollars in emergency room visits each year. CVCH is financially sustainable and is constantly examining the way we serve our patients and operate within a narrow margin. We utilize best practices, track our clinical and operational measures, and implement high quality standards of care.”

In April 2012, CVCH was the first outpatient clinic in the Pacific Northwest, and one of only 18 in the country, to receive [Primary Care Medical Home certification from the Joint Commission](#). Watson says this accreditation demonstrates CVCH’s ability to rapidly adapt. “It recognizes the strides we are making and the meaningful improvements we are implementing that lower costs and improve the health of our communities.”

Watson attributes both the Joint Commission certification and his MVP Advocacy award to the staff and leadership of Columbia Valley Community Health.

“Everyone from the top down is passionate about patient satisfaction. We empower and motivate our staff to be a part of the decision-making process which results in a positive, efficient environment and high quality care for our patients.”

About Columbia Valley Community Health

[Columbia Valley Community Health](#) is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that offers medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, WIC and outreach services to everyone in Chelan and Douglas Counties. Their mission is to provide access to improved health and wellness with compassion and respect for all.

Established in 1972, CVCH is now an industry leader and was the first in the Pacific Northwest to achieve the Joint Commission’s Primary Care Medical Home certification. CVCH serves well over 25,000 patients a year between all of its departments and locations in Wenatchee, East Wenatchee and Chelan.

About the National Association of Community Health Centers

Founded in 1970, the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) (NACHC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance and expand access to quality, community-responsive health care for America’s medically underserved and uninsured. NACHC represents the nation’s network of over 1,200 FQHC’s which serve over 22 million people through more than 9,000 sites located in all of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam.

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