

2020 President's Awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – PHOTOS AVAILABLE

Contact: Ginnie Flynn, Vice President of Communications
630-427-8004 office, 630-263-4613 cell, gflynn@iafp.com

Two Honored with IAFP President's Awards

(October 14, 2020) – The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) presented its highest honors at their annual meeting on October 14 held online and live-streamed via Facebook and YouTube. Among the awards presented were the IAFP President's Awards, given at the discretion of the outgoing president to honor individuals or organizations that have contributed to the mission of the IAFP of promoting the value of the specialty of family medicine and improving health for all through advocacy, education and action.

Outgoing IAFP President Monica J. Fudala, MD presented her 2020 President's Awards to these two outstanding physician leaders.

Ngozi Ezike, MD – Director, Illinois Department of Public Health



In normal times, leading the Illinois Department of Public Health is a large undertaking for a state of nearly 13 million people and the immense challenges in preventing chronic disease and managing acute illnesses, infectious diseases and promoting vaccine awareness and adherence. Then 2020 brought Illinois and the world to a stop in the face of a once in a century

pandemic. While all states struggled to combat the coronavirus, Illinois has been held up as one of the most effective in dealing with COVID-19 on many fronts under the collaborative leadership of Dr. Ngozi Ezike and Governor JB Pritzker's administration.

"Ezike's tireless and passionate guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic is a tremendous beacon of positive leadership during the most frightening and uncertain time most of us have ever seen and will hopefully never experience again," said Dr. Fudala. "Her compassionate vigilance has provided our state, the health care community and the media with evidence-based, scientific actions combined with a human touch, which is so much like the family medicine we all need and rely on in the face of a health crisis."

Dr. Ngozi Ezike was appointed by Governor JB Pritzker to serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health on January 31, 2019. Prior to joining IDPH, Dr. Ezike worked for over 15 years with Cook County Health, promoting the organization's mission of "delivering integrated health services with dignity and respect regardless of a patient's ability to pay." In her last role with Cook County Health, she served as Medical Director at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. Dr. Ezike is a national policy advisor on juvenile correctional health topics and has presented at numerous local and national conferences for both medical professionals and youth audiences. She has also served as a federal court monitor for health-related matters concerning juvenile correctional facilities under consent decree.

She has delivered inpatient care at Stroger Hospital as well as primary and preventive care in community and school-based clinics. She earned her medical degree at the University of California at San Diego. She completed her internship and residency at Rush Medical Center in Chicago, where she is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics.

"Dr. Ezike and Gov. JB Pritzker showed our state how to effectively and respectfully collaborate to protect our people and provide information, solutions and services in a constantly evolving situation," concluded Dr. Fudala.

Raj C. Shah, MD, MPH— Alzheimer's Disease Center at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago



Dr. Fudala selected Dr. Raj Shah for his outstanding contributions to patients and caregivers facing Alzheimer's Disease, as well as numerous activities educating medical students at Rush Medical College. He has also expanded the influence of the IAFP's Public Health committee and medical student opportunities within the Academy.

As a faculty member of the respected Rush Family Medicine Leadership Program, Dr. Shah serves as a research mentor for M1 and M2 students. He co-leads "Design for America" sessions to facilitate connections and provide support for students partnering with community leaders and organizations. Additionally, he guides students in developing creative approaches to community-based research and collaboration.

"Dr. Shah inspires medical students to have the courage to actively influence the future of family medicine," says Lauren Turich, MPH, and an IAFP Public Health Extern this year. "He leads by example in all he does, embodying a family medicine physician relentlessly committed to his patients, the community, and the future generations of family medicine leaders."

Specifically, within IAFP, Dr. Shah serves as Behavioral Health Workgroup Chair of the Public Health Committee. One of his most enduring programs is the Youth Mental Health First Aid courses. He trained to become a YMHFA instructor and then worked directly with IAFP student member volunteers to organize and lead ten free certification courses at Rush Medical College. These trainings were available to any community members, as well area medical students.

He also developed a new continuing medical education (CME) format, "Conversations with Families about Alzheimer's Disease" as a method to introduce attendings and residents to the background stories about Alzheimer's disease and its daily effects on patients and caregivers. The first live event, Docs Night Out: Conversations with Families about Alzheimer's Disease was held in June 2019 and replicated as a webinar.

IAFP has greatly benefitted Dr. Shah's work to organize and host the first IAFP Public Health externship with UIC college of medicine graduate Dr. Kevin Chang. That effort evolved into two Public Health externs in 2019-20, Daniel Bester and Lauren Turich. IAFP will expand to four or more Public Health externs for 2020-21. These externs have co-created resources, publications and activities for IAFP members especially on the integration of behavioral health and primary care.

Dr. Shah graduated from the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Chicago and completed

2020 Presidents Awards

Written by Ginnie Flynn - Last Updated Thursday, October 08, 2020 05:52 PM

his family medicine residency training at West Suburban Hospital Family Medicine in Oak Park.

Both President's Awards recipients accepted their award live via Zoom at the IAFP's Virtual Annual meeting and Award's ceremony on October 14.

-END-

The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) represents over 4,800 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students dedicated to promoting the value of the specialty of Family Medicine and improving health for all through advocacy, education and action. Learn more at www.iafp.com