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Rick Stevens is Stellar Performer

BJC Christian Hospital president to be honored at Health Salute April 26

By Rebecca Rivas
Of The St. Louis American

The paramedics weren't able to save her. About 50 clergy members watched as a team of BJC Christian Hospital paramedics swooped in and tried to resuscitate a 21-year-old woman who had overdosed on heroin.

■ "Rick has been very much a man to not only give vision but to listen – and listen to what the community has to say."

– Bishop Larry Jones

was only re-enacting a reality it faces daily during a community meeting with clergy on Monday, April 1. "We have the busiest emergency room in the state of Missouri," Christian Hospital President Rick Stevens told clergy members.



Christian Hospital President Rick Stevens hosted a community meeting with clergy on April 1. On Friday, April 26, he will receive the Stellar Performer in Health Care Award at the St. Louis American Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Health Care Awards Luncheon.

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Photo by Raharna Rivas

STEVENS

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Sometimes the hospital staff will see the same person who has overdosed in the morning come back again in the afternoon and evening, he said. "How can we work together to solve this problem?" Stevens said. "This hospital alone can't do it, but we can do it with the partnerships, with you all together."

The hospital has been hosting quarterly meetings with the clergy for a few years, but the April 1 meeting had the biggest turnout yet. The hope is that providing information to the religious community about health services and issues will allow the ministers to share it with their congregations and be health care advocates.

"I'm passionate about health care," Stevens told *The St. Louis American*. "I want the best for the community where I work, which is North County and beyond."

On April 26, Stevens will receive the Stellar Performer in Health Care Award at the St. Louis American Foundation's 19th Annual Salute to Excellence in Health Care Awards Luncheon at the Frontenac Hilton. His ability to inspire action in the community during his nearly three years as president is among the reasons he is being honored.

"Rick has been very much a man to not only give vision but to listen," said Bishop Larry Jones of Greater Grace Church, "and listen to what the community has to say."

Since Stevens' arrival in 2016, the hospital's parking



Photo by Wiley Price

lots appear to be fuller when Jones drives past and the people have more positive things to say about the care they receive.

"People are trusting Christian again," Jones said. "He has brought something more open and giving to the hospital to meet the needs of the community to where everyone feels important."

People have taken notice of the renovated lobby that was unveiled in October as being more "warm and welcoming," Jones said, and there are more single-bed hospital rooms so families can enjoy some privacy. In December, the newest Siteman Cancer Center outpatient facility on Christian Hospital's Northwest HealthCare campus is set to be

finished, a \$26-million project. The nearly 37,000-square-foot facility at Interstate 270 and Graham Road in Florissant will feature state-of-the-art technology, including a new linear accelerator to deliver radiation therapy.

All of these renovations are part of the \$60 million that BJC HealthCare is investing into Christian Hospital, "which is a \$60 million investment into the community as well," Stevens said.

Major players in the community have taken notice of Stevens' work and have become more engaged, said Kel Ward, community health outreach manager at Christian Hospital and St. Louis Children's Hospital.

"When I started coming

to the Community Leader Breakfasts, I started noticing those leaders coming," Ward said. "Rick is onto something because I know these individuals are busy, but they are consistently coming. They are getting engaged, and a lot of that is attributed to Rick's leadership."

This engagement has led to more partnerships, Stevens said. Christian Hospital has partnered with the Salvation Army in a \$1-million grant to add community health workers in the Ferguson area. Funding from the Christian Hospital Foundation allowed two school districts, Hazelwood and Riverview Gardens, to open school-based health centers in October. Medical professionals from CareSTL

Health staff the facilities and provide a combined total of 2,500 students with a full range of health services, including medical, dental, specialty and behavioral health care.

"That just means the best care is coming to North County through Christian Hospital," Stevens said.

In 2016, Stevens was recruited to come to St. Louis for this position after four years in San Francisco, where he was chief administrative officer at St. Luke's Hospital and vice president at California Pacific Medical Center. He has more than 20 years of health care experience, with previous executive roles at Methodist McKinney Hospital in McKinney, Texas; Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's

Under President Rick Stevens, Christian Hospital partnered with CareSTL Health last year to open school-based health centers in the Hazelwood (pictured) and Riverview Gardens school districts.

Healthcare in Louisville, Kentucky; and University Medical Center in Dallas.

Stevens grew up in Rockford, Illinois, the son of a small businessman – his father operated a successful tax service and invested in real estate.

"I was a biology major in college, but I always had business in the back of my mind because of my dad," Steven said, "so I married the two by becoming a healthcare administrator."

He earned a master's degree in public health, with a concentration in healthcare administration, from Meharry Medical College and a bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University, both in Nashville. He has served in leadership roles with the American Cancer Society, Salvation Army, and a number of other community organizations.

Stevens believes Christian Hospital is one of the "best-kept secrets" because of the doctors, specialists and great staff that take care of North County residents.

"This award is not about me," Stevens said. "This award is about Christian Hospital and all the staff members that work here."

Tickets for the 19th Annual Salute to Excellence in Health Care Awards Luncheon on Friday, April 26 at the Frontenac Hilton are \$750 per table for VIP/Corporate seating and \$50 each/\$500 table for Individual seating. To order tickets, call 314-533-8000 or visit www.stlamerican.com.

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UnitedHealthcare steps up for Boys & Girls Club

Employees of UnitedHealthcare of Missouri presented the Boys & Girls Club of Greater St. Louis with a \$1,000 donation as part of UnitedHealthcare's "Step Up for Better Health" campaign. UnitedHealthcare also donated a treadmill and 100 pedometers to the Boys and Girls Club at Hazelwood School District's Southeast Middle School, to encourage student to become more active this during "Move More Month" this April.

From left to right: UnitedHealthcare employees Kenneth Powell, Danielle Long and company mascot Dr. Health E. Hound; UnitedHealthcare Chief Executive Officer Pat Quinn; Southeast Middle School Boys & Girls Club site director Abrionna Humphery; President of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater St. Louis Flint Fowler; UnitedHealthcare Community and State Plan Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ravi Johar, and UnitedHealthcare employee Tiara Thompson.

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