



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Bi-State Primary Care Association  
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### **Vermonters Receive Awards for Improving Access to Primary Health Care for the Underserved in Vermont**

VERMONT – AUGUST 25, 2020 – Bi-State Primary Care Association will recognize four Vermonters for their significant impact on health care access in Vermont at Bi-State's virtual Awards Ceremony on September 2 at 5:00 p.m., on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BiStatePrimaryCareAssociation/>.

**Bi-State's Board of Directors' Chair Award: Mark Levine, MD, VT Commissioner of Health.** "The Bi-State Board Chair Award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Bi-State's mission to ensure access to health care for vulnerable populations in Vermont and New Hampshire." Dr. Levine, Vermont's Commissioner of Health since March 2017, is a former professor and Associate Dean at the University of Vermont and the UV Medical Center. He is passionate about pulling together clinical, public health, and advocacy efforts to develop health policy and improve population health. We have seen this in action. Dr. Levine is tireless when it comes to working on public health issues, including tobacco use and vaping. When nominated for this Award, we could not predict the COVID-19 pandemic or his bold leadership in ushering Vermont through it. Our ICU's stayed within their capacity during the initial COVID-19 wave, and the state safely resumed many economic and community activities throughout the summer. We are working with Dr. Levine's leadership to continue a reopening strategy that keeps COVID-19 at bay."

**The Hunt Blair Leadership Award: Ashleen Buchanan, Little Rivers Health Care, E. Corinth, VT.** Bi-State's Hunt Blair Leadership Award recognizes the potential every individual has to improve the lives of many people, as demonstrated by the brilliance, tenacity, and vision of Hunt Blair. Ms. Buchanan joined Little Rivers Health Care in 2016 as the Blueprint for Health Regional Coordinator and quickly became the "wellness champion" creatively promoting wellness at every opportunity. Ashleen made it possible for Little Rivers' patients to access more preventive and wellness support resources and enhanced support for self-management of chronic conditions. Ashleen's leadership of the Upper Valley Community Collaborative turned a once poorly attended meeting into a standing-room-only event with broad representation from local and state health and human service organizations working together to complete projects that have a real impact in the community.

**The Outstanding Clinician Award – Brian Bates, MD, Physician Leader, Mountain Health Center, Arlington, VT.** Bi-State's Outstanding Clinician Award honors primary care clinicians whose exemplary skills and service have made a significant impact on the health of underserved patients and the communities in which they serve. Dr. Brian Bates is a Federally Qualified Health Center clinician who believes primary care providers, with broad knowledge and an understanding of the impact of social determinants of health, are a critical asset in the promotion of health and well-being in individuals, families, and communities. Dr. Bates' thoughtful insight helped the Mountain Health Center staff understand the needs of Vermont's medically-underserved populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The Public Service Award – Primary Care Advisory Group of the Green Mountain Care Board:** Bi-State's Public Service Award honors individuals whose position allows them to make extraordinary contributions in the area of public health and primary care access in Vermont and New Hampshire. The health care providers serving on the Green Mountain Care Board's Primary Care Advisory Group have generously given their time and input from their experiences to inform public policy. Meeting bi-monthly and comprised of primary care providers from different organization types, this group has brought attention to the administrative burden impact and has deliberated on workforce development needs and has developed the Green Mountain Care Board's definition of primary care.

#### **About Bi-State Primary Care Association**

Bi-State Primary Care Association is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501 (c) 3 charitable organization that represents New Hampshire and Vermont's 28 Community Health Centers serving over 315,400 patients at 143 locations.

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