



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 26, 2023

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## **Louisiana Primary Care Association Recognizes Community Healthcare Excellence Awardees**

**BATON ROUGE, LA** – The Louisiana Primary Care Association (LPCA) has announced the honorees for the organization's prestigious 2023 Community Healthcare Excellence Awards. These awards recognize Community Health Center leaders and supporters who have gone above and beyond in service to their communities and who have displayed unwavering commitment to expanding access to healthcare. These individuals were awarded during LPCA's 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Continuing Education Conference on October 18th in Lake Charles, LA.

*2023 Community Health Care Excellence honorees include:*

- ***Eric B. Taylor Leadership Award***  
Helena Likaj, MPH | Director of Clinics, Prevention, & Pharmacies  
*Odyssey House Louisiana*
- ***Legislative Champion Award***
  - Representative Christopher Turner  
*Louisiana State House of Representatives*
  - Senator Fred H. Mills  
*Louisiana State Senate*
- ***Healthcare Provider of the Year Award***  
LaKesha Collins-Patterson, FNP-C | Vice President of Clinical Operations  
*Open Health Care Clinic*
- ***Customer Service Excellence Award***  
Taneisha Jones, MA | Clinical Site Lead  
*Priority Health Care*



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Helena Likaj, Director of Clinics, Prevention, and Pharmacies at Odyssey House Louisiana (OHL), was awarded the Eric B. Taylor Leadership Award. This award is presented to an outstanding staff member of a Louisiana Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) who exemplifies passion and commitment to improving the care and quality of life for health center patients. Throughout her six years of service at Odyssey House Louisiana, Helena has made great strides to ensure quality client care. She integrated many screenings and procedures to ensure that all clients who walk through her health center's doors have access to preventative care.

In 2022, Helena oversaw the implementation of OHL's 340B pharmacy that allows clients to have access to their medication with little to no cost involved. Helena was most recently recognized in Gambit's 40 under 40 for 2023.

Louisiana lawmakers Representative Christopher Turner and Senator Fred H. Mills were each awarded the Legislative Champion Award. Representative Turner led the charge just this year to implement legislation to protect the 340B Drug Pricing Program that allows patients and FQHCs alike to access prescription medications at discounted rates. Senator Mills brought forth new policy language that expands access and services for telehealth, broadening the ability of healthcare providers who are not physicians to deliver remote healthcare services and bridge gaps in care. Both policymakers were recognized for their support of Community Health Centers and their willingness to champion wider access to primary care in their districts and in communities across Louisiana.

LaKesha Collins-Patterson, FNP-C, Vice President of Clinical Operations at Open Health Care Clinic, was awarded the Healthcare Provider of the Year Award. Each year, this award recognizes an outstanding healthcare provider who has demonstrated dedication, expertise, and concern for their patients in a compassionate and comprehensive manner. For the purposes of this award, provider is defined as physician, dentist, pharmacist, behavioral health clinician, or mid-level practitioner who is employed by an LPCA member.

Mrs. Collins-Patterson has eight years of experience in community health. She has been a primary care provider at Open Health Care Clinic for five years and was most recently promoted to Vice President of Clinical Operations, a prestigious and influential role where she spearheads initiatives to improve patient care, optimize healthcare processes and enhance the overall effectiveness of healthcare delivery. As a VP, she has maintained providing excellent care to thousands of patients while taking on many responsibilities within an administrator role. Over the course of her tenure, she has championed many initiatives to improve patient access for underserved populations.

Taneisha Jones, MA, Clinical Site Lead at Priority Health Care, was awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award. This award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution by providing excellent internal and/or external customer service to health center consumers and fellow colleagues, and who works cooperatively with staff at all levels of community health center operations.



This award recognizes outstanding contributions by front line and other health center staff who have direct interaction with health center clients.

Ms. Jones has worked at Priority Health Care for nine years. During that time, she has served in many different roles in multiple departments. She has worked the front desk, the clinic floor, the pharmacy department, and now she is a Clinic Site Lead responsible for day-to-day operations. Ms. Jones is known for her exceptional customer service and her commitment to each patient that visits Priority Health Care.

“We have some phenomenal people working in Community Health Centers across Louisiana,” said Gerrelda Davis, Executive Director of the Louisiana Primary Care Association. “Our health center network continues to grow and this success is attributed to those who are on the frontlines of our Community Health Center movement.

“I want to congratulate each of our 2023 honorees. Thank you for the leadership you have shown and for your dedication to improving the health and well-being of our state.”

LPCA’s Annual Conference and awards banquet serves as the state’s largest gathering of Community Health Center professionals – administrators, clinicians, board members and advocates who all share a passion for promoting expanded and equitable access to healthcare. This year’s theme was “Pressing Forward with Excellence: Winding Down Pandemic Practices, Accelerating into the Future.”

For more information about this conference and other upcoming events, visit [LPCA.net](http://LPCA.net).

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### **About the Louisiana Primary Care Association**

Established in 1982 as a non-profit organization, the Louisiana Primary Care Association proudly serves as the voice of Louisiana’s Community Health Centers, promoting accessible, affordable, quality healthcare services for the uninsured and medically underserved populations of our state. LPCA represents 41 federally funded Community Health Center organizations who collectively serve over 475,000 patients per year. Learn more at [LPCA.net](http://LPCA.net).