

AHE And Kimberly-Clark Professional Announce 2015 Heart Of Healthcare Award Recipient

Long-time employee of Mercy Hospital in Fairfield, Ohio recognized with annual award, which honors exceptional environmental services professionals, for being an 'integral part of the healthcare' team

GRAPEVINE, Texas, Sept. 21, 2015 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Dorothy Huffman, an environmental services professional who has worked at Mercy Hospital in Fairfield, OH, for 36 years, has received the 2015 Heart of Healthcare Award in recognition of her exceptional efforts to protect and enhance patient health.

"Dorothy epitomizes perfection when it comes to representing the environmental services profession," said Marci Butts, manager of support services for Mercy Health System's Fairfield Hospital. "She holds herself and her peers accountable for preventing HAIs. Our hospital has the lowest C-diff rate in our region and I attribute it not only to our hardwired processes and engaged staff but also to Dorothy's watchful eye and high level of accountability."

The Heart of Healthcare Awards are presented annually by the Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE), a personal membership group of the American Hospital Association (AHA), and Kimberly-Clark Professional. Now in its fourth year, the awards honor outstanding environmental services professionals who make a difference in the lives of patients and long-term care residents.

"Through proper care and maintenance of the healthcare environment, healthcare environmental services professionals like Dorothy Huffman play a crucial role in patient care, as well as ensuring patient safety and satisfaction," said Patti Costello, AHE executive director. "Dorothy is admired and appreciated by every member of her facility's healthcare team as well as the patients she cares for. She exemplifies how today's healthcare environmental services teams strive to go beyond cleaning and disinfecting to creating a healing atmosphere that leads to better patient outcomes."

The Heart of Healthcare Program

Developed by AHE and Kimberly-Clark Professional, the Heart of Healthcare program recognizes the critical contributions that environmental services professionals play in enhancing patient safety in the healthcare environment. It is focused on continuing education and recognition for environmental services professionals and enhancing the patient experience. Tools include:

- Education and training guides
- Employee recognition certificates
- Patient discharge and room calling cards

All Heart of Healthcare program tools and educational materials can be customized to include a healthcare facility's logo. The materials are available through the AHE website, www.ahe.org.

The program has improved the patient experience, according to 83 percent of environmental service managers

who have implemented it at their facility. More than 700 healthcare facilities now participate in the program.

Nominations for the Heart of Healthcare Awards are submitted each year by managers, supervisors, co-workers and members of departments in hospitals and long-term care facilities. The AHE Recognition Committee reviews all submissions and selects the winning applicants.

"We are once again proud to be a part of the Heart of Healthcare Awards, which bring well-deserved attention to the commitment and dedication of environmental services professionals," said Sarah Happel, healthcare segment leader, Kimberly-Clark Professional. "We hope this year's honoree will serve as an inspiration to others as well as shine a spotlight on the role that environmental services professionals play in achieving exceptional patient outcomes and enhancing patient satisfaction."

2015 First Place Awardee

Huffman joined Mercy Health System's Fairfield Hospital in 1978. "Throughout the years, she has stayed true to what is most important to her – the patients," Butts said.

"Dorothy connects with everyone in our hospital," said Thomas S. Urban, president of Fairfield Hospital. "While she is not a clinical caregiver, she unquestionably is a caregiver. She truly cares about other people and their loved ones. She is an integral part of our healthcare team and models this behavior to others within EVS and throughout the hospital."

Her unit is consistently ranked highest for patient experience scores, which reflect both cleanliness and courtesy, making hers the best in a facility that is ranked in the top 88th percentile in the Press Ganey database of healthcare providers. "If we have a cleanliness issue on another unit or compliance concerns with other staff members, she is who we call on to retrain and troubleshoot solutions," Butts added.

Huffman educates her peers, patients and their families on the importance of frequent hand washing, using the appropriate protective apparel and paying particular attention to detail cleaning of high touch points throughout the room.

Huffman was the first environmental services employee to receive the hospital's Partnership in Nursing award. But what stands out more than anything is her dedication to the hospital's patients and their families.

"Barely a day goes by where I don't get a call from a patient telling me how wonderful Dorothy is," Butts said. "When I round on her unit, patients call me into their rooms to sing Dorothy's praises. We even have patients from other units who request Dorothy because they remember her from previous visits."

About AHE

The Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE) is a personal membership group of the American Hospital Association. AHE is the professional organization of choice for professionals responsible for caring for the patient and resident care environment across all care settings; including hospitals, long term care, continuing care retirement communities and ambulatory care. AHE shapes professional practice, advances and promotes the profession and promotes awareness for over 2,000 professionals working to ensure a clean and safe healthcare environment and equality outcomes. www.ahe.org

About Kimberly-Clark Professional

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