



**American Hospital  
Association**

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**Susan L. Starling Receives AHA's Shirley Ann Munroe Leadership Award**

*Finalists from Berlin, Md., Memphis, Mo., and  
Mountain City, Tenn., Also Recognized*

WASHINGTON (November 25, 2013) – Susan L. Starling, president and CEO of Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital (MWMH) in Irvine, Ky. and a member of Catholic Health Partners, is the 2013 winner of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) Shirley Ann Munroe Leadership Award. The award recognizes the accomplishments of small or rural hospital leaders who have improved health care delivery in their communities through innovative and progressive efforts.

Starling is respected by the staff, the board of directors, the community and public officials as a leader who fosters strong collaborative relationship that improve the health care of the rural community. Her coalition-building acumen results in continuous success for the facility, as well as statewide partnerships that have improved the quality of and access to health care in rural Kentucky.

When she arrived at MWMH, she confronted issues related to the facility and culture that many other small rural hospitals face. She was able to transform the hospital into a modern, flourishing organization. Through Starling's leadership in initiatives such as Project HOME (Helpful Opportunities for Medical care Enhancement), MWMH has connected uninsured and underinsured patients with preventative healthcare services. Additional partnerships resulted in the first rural community lung cancer screening and breast cancer awareness and screening.

Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital serves a community of approximately 15,000, covering several counties that experience health care challenges related to issues such as access to care. Many of the patients they serve do not have a hospital in their county and travel more than 30 miles—MWMH is truly critical to the community. In 2010, under Starling’s groundbreaking direction, MWMH received state certification as the first Level IV Trauma Center in Kentucky.

Starling has dedicated 30 years of service at Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital. From 1991 to 2001, she filled the role of chief operating officer and was selected as president and CEO in 2001. Previously, she held an administrative position at the Pattie A. Clay Hospital in Richmond, Ky. In 2012 she received the Kentucky Rural Health Association’s Dan Martin Award for her dedication to rural health care in Kentucky. The AHAPAC recognized her as a “Most Valuable Player” for her significant outreach and advocacy efforts.

This year, the Shirley Ann Munroe Leadership Award also recognized three finalists for their significant achievements in service to their community:

- **Michael A. Franklin**, President and CEO of Atlantic General Hospital/Health System, a community-based system located on Maryland’s Eastern Shore in Worcester County, a federally designated medically underserved area. Since 2005, Franklin has been at the helm of the system, shepherding the organization through a period of challenges. Receiving a significant financial award from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Atlantic was an early innovator to the Patient Center Medical Home Model. Additionally, Franklin has successfully implemented a 30-Minute ER Promise, electronic medical records for the system and environmentally conscious physical plant upgrades.
- **Marcia R. Dial** has worked at Scotland County Hospital in Memphis, Mo. for more than 38 years. Since her appointment as CEO in 1988, she has turned the small, struggling 25-bed facility into a model rural health care system. She has an aptitude for recruiting physicians and nurses, and is very resourceful in a way that has led to multiple grants. Dial collaborated with health departments and community leaders to open three rural clinics, expanding access to health services to rural northeast Missouri and southeast

Iowa.

- **Lisa Heaton** Vice President/Administrator and Chief Nursing Officer of Johnson County Community Hospital in Mountain City, Tenn. This two-bed critical access hospital serves a geographically isolated and impoverished area. As administrator, Heaton introduced telemedicine to the facility, which greatly expanded radiological services; she also opened a cardiac rehab program and an in-house stress lab. Heaton looks at the health needs of the community and advocates for primary care, disease management and prevention, and collaborated to add fluoride to the drinking water.

### **Shirley Ann Munroe Award**

Shirley Ann Munroe was an advocate for small and rural hospitals and was instrumental in the creation of the AHA's Section for Small or Rural Hospitals, a forum working to support small and rural hospitals as they improve their community's health.

The award is sponsored by the AHA's Section for Small or Rural Hospitals. It is presented annually to a hospital administrator or chief executive officer who has displayed outstanding leadership in meeting the ongoing challenge of small or rural hospital management. Last year's award recipient was James J. Bleicher, MD, President and CEO of Verde Valley Medical Center (VVMC) in Cottonwood, Ariz.

### **About AHA**

The American Hospital Association (AHA) is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which includes nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, and other providers of care, and 43,000 individuals. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information, visit the AHA website at [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org).

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