Government Relations Activist: National Award Nomination Form

Purpose

- To openly honor recipient(s) who have provided exceptional accomplishments at the Chapter and/or national level regarding government relations activities
- To acknowledge and promote achievement(s) deserving of said recognition

History

- Award established in 1996
- To be given annually
- Award is selected and kept unannounced until time of presentation
- There may be more than one (1) recipient in a given year
- Recipient(s) name(s) are engraved on a plaque at the National Office

Qualifications

- Recipient(s) does not have to be a member of AMTA or a massage therapist
- Recipient(s) may have participated at the National and/or Chapter level in government relations
- Recipient(s) shall not have received this award in the previous year
- Recommended by the Awards Committee
- Approved by the Executive Committee

Nominator Information

Name: Hailey Strampel
Chapter: Colorado Chapter
Email: HLStrampel@gmail.com

Nominee Information

Name: Chanda Hinton Leichtle
Chapter: not a member or massage therapist – a recipient of massage therapy
Email: ch@iamtheplan.org

Reasons

What are the reasons you selected the nominee? (Please provide specific examples)

Chanda Hinton Leichtle experienced first-hand the benefits of receiving massage therapy, which was not covered by her insurance – Medicaid. In 2005, she started a non-profit association, Chanda Plan Foundation, whose mission is to provide access to integrative therapy, primary care, and other complementary services to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs for persons with physical disabilities through the Chanda Center for Health.

Chanda Plan Foundation also pursues systemic change to have integrative therapies covered by Medicaid. According to a publication by Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program), "Chanda Hinton-Leichtle is the executive director and founder of the Chanda Plan Foundation and **the powerhouse behind the development of the bill that was passed by the Colorado state legislature in 2009 to institute the Spinal Cord Injury waiver.** "I'm dedicated to orchestrating the changes needed to make integrative services, specifically acupuncture, chiropractic and massage therapy available," said Hinton-Leichtle. "These services are vital for myself and for others with physical disabilities and spinal cord injuries. It is important to have as many providers involved as possible. More providers and locations help to increase the accessibility of services for members with spinal cord injuries."

The HCBS Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Waiver pilot program was set to expire in 2020. In the 2019 CO Legislative session, Chanda successfully introduced SB19-197 "Continue Complementary or Alternative Medicine Program" which sought to

extend the SCI Waiver for an additional 5 years. On April 27th, 2019, the bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature. (See attachments)

In 2018, Chanda Center for Health was able to deliver over 2,100 massage sessions to persons with spinal cord injuries that were all covered by the Medicaid HCBS SCI Waiver program. In addition, the Chanda Center for Health delivered an additional 1,700+ massages for free or at a drastically reduced rate for persons with long-term disabilities that do not qualify for the SCI Waiver program funded by generous donors in the community.

Chanda's past and current legislative efforts resulted in the State of Colorado Medicaid reaching out to the AMTA Colorado Chapter to spread the word to the members that they need more massage providers to enroll as Providers for Medicaid as demand is increasing.

The link below is the Guide to the SCI Waiver – Provider Enrollment information.
https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Complementary%20and%20Integrative%20Health%20Services%20Guide-September%202018.pdf

Characteristics

What outstanding characteristics or other distinguishing criteria make the nominee uniquely qualified for this award?

Chanda has not allowed her quadriplegia to stop her from reaching her goal of making massage therapy accessible for persons with physical disabilities, as well as getting Medicaid to start covering it. She has developed model legislation that could be used in other states that have Home and Community Based Service waivers.

Chanda's story and her GR activism was recently highlighted by Rocky Mountain PBS. The following link is the one-hour documentary "The Caliber of Healing" that recently aired on Rocky Mountain PBS and explores the long-term impact of gun incidents through the personal stories of three Coloradans whose lives were forever changed when a bullet created lifelong paralysis.

Featuring personal stories of healing, this documentary explores how three Coloradans & Chanda Center for Health participants dealt with the lifelong changes that come with a spinal cord injury inflicted by a bullet. From a drive-by shooting to an accidental shooting, to a mass shooting, discover how each of them dealt with the physical, mental and financial impact, tackled forgiveness, and explored alternative treatments like acupuncture and **massage** to help in their journey of healing.

https://video.rmpbs.org/video/the-caliber-of-healing-qppasg/

See the attached picture of Chanda and SCI Waiver participants that testified in support of SB19-197 that will extend the SCI Waiver for an additional 5 years.

Please send this form to Colleen Leeders at ckleeders@amtamassage.org by April 30th, 2019.