



PRESS RELEASE

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ATSPA Presents 2020 Recognition Awards

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) held the 2020 Recognition Awards Presentation today. Each year, ATSPA recognizes physicians, nurses, EMTs, first responders and civilians who demonstrate a commitment to excellence in the trauma prevention and treatment field. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the presentation was held virtually.

“These awardees sacrifice so much for their communities and deserve to be recognized for their efforts,” said Krista Brands, ATSPA CEO. “ATSPA would like to thank not only our award recipients, but all healthcare workers and first responders for their bravery, support and continued pledge to make Pennsylvania safer.”

The Trauma Prevention Recognition Award is given to an individual or community group who goes above and beyond in committing to trauma prevention programming. The 2020 recipients are Tom Causer, RN, BSN, RRT, HP, from Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, Cambria County; Richard Garland, MSW, from the University of Pittsburgh, GRIPS in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County; Beverly Shirk, BSN, RN, from Penn State Children’s Hospital, in Hershey, Dauphin County; and Chestnut Ridge Ambulance Association, in Alum Bank, Bedford County.

The First Responder Call to Action Award is given annually to recognize the efforts of first responders in their commitment to trauma prevention and care. The 2020 recipient is Sergeant Darren Cotton from the Derry Township Police Department, in Hershey, Dauphin County. Sgt. Cotton was recognized for his partnership with both the Pediatric and Adult Trauma Programs at Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

The Civilian Savior and Survivor Award is presented to one who takes it upon him/herself to offer a helping hand to a fellow citizen during a period of adversity or personal danger, and/or one who withstands peril and dangerous conditions and demonstrates a determined will to survive. The 2020 recipient is Matthew Charles, from Mountville, Lancaster County.

The Barbara Esposito Excellence in Trauma Nursing Award is given annually to a trauma staff nurse who has displayed excellence in any one of the following areas: clinical expertise, leadership, research, education, prevention, outreach and patient advocacy. The 2020 recipient is Shannon Wittenberg, from Jefferson Torresdale Hospital in Philadelphia.

The Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr. Physician Award for the Commitment to Excellence in Trauma Care is given to a physician who has displayed a commitment to excellence in trauma care in the following areas: clinical expertise, philanthropy, leadership, trauma-related research and trauma prevention and education. The 2020 recipient is Russell Dumire, MD, FACS, from Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center, in Johnstown, Cambria County.



The Julia Cox, RN Distinguished Service Award is presented to one who demonstrates a continued commitment to trauma prevention, through his/her support of ATSPA. The 2020 recipient is Michael J. Reihart, DO, FACEP, FAEMS, from Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, in Lancaster.

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is a non-profit organization committed to trauma prevention and mitigation through education and advocacy. Our work includes providing presentations and educational materials on many trauma prevention topics, including concussions, water safety, senior falls, bike safety, traffic safety and much more.

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Pictures of the awardees and a recording of the presentation are available upon request. Background information on each awardee is below.



Awardee Background Information

Tom Causer, RN, BSN, RRT, HP, of Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center

Causer has been an instrumental advocate, curriculum designer, coordinator, and instructor in the Stop the Bleed program provided through Conemaugh Health System. Causer incorporates his own journey as both a trauma nurse and EMT through the explanation of best practices to prevent excessive bleeding and to illustrate how techniques have evolved over time. Over just two short years, the Conemaugh Stop the Bleed program provided educational presentations to every public school within Cambria County; and did not stop there. They have expanded their efforts to include schools in surrounding counties as well as private schools and first responders. Causer has been instrumental in ensuring that all schools that received training, also received Stop the Bleed tourniquet kits.

Richard Garland, MSW, of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Public Health

Garland created the GRIPS program to help reduce the number of victims of firearm violence in Allegheny County. GRIPS is an acronym for Gunshot Recurring Injury Prevention Services. Garland meets with trauma patients who have had injuries because of firearm violence at the 5 trauma centers in Allegheny County. Garland provides counseling, mentoring, and when appropriate, help with relocation of the patient. In addition, Garland has also established a county outreach communication service called "Shot Watch" that emails firearm related violence trends to key personnel within Allegheny County.

Beverly Shirk, RN, BSN, of Penn State Children's Hospital

Shirk has led a team of individuals within Penn State Health to provide Teen Driver Education to both teens and parents throughout the region. She has successfully collaborated with Team DUI to enhance the teen driver education programming, striving to reduce teen injuries and deaths. In addition to Shirk's focus on teen drivers, she also actively participates in providing farm safety information to children and families as well as assists with Drugs 101, a collaboration with the Susan P. Byrnes Foundation.

Chestnut Ridge Ambulance Association

A few years ago, the ambulance association was approached by a local trauma center regarding Stop the Bleed education in a local school. The ambulance association volunteers immediately agreed to assist the trauma center outreach efforts which then led to the volunteers organizing additional Stop the Bleed programs for various other groups in the community. These volunteers stepped up again when the focus was shifted to farm safety programming for local farm families. The ambulance association volunteers organized, promoted, and planned the entire event which received high marks from those in attendance. The Chestnut Ridge Ambulance Association has now started tackling the area of older adult falls with a grant opportunity from the ATSPA.

Sergeant Darren Cotten of the Derry Township Police Department

Sgt. Cotten has assisted in educating over 4,500 law enforcement officers, community members, school faculty, and others in Stop the Bleed education. He serves on Penn State Health's Community Outreach Committee and has assisted with teen driver safety programming and National Night Out events.



Matthew Charles

Charles was working at a local business on Nov. 5, 2019, when he heard the crash and sprang into action. A 24-year-old woman was critically injured when the chipper, being towed by a large tree trimming truck, jack-knifed, and ripped off the side of her vehicle. With no regard for his own safety, Charles entered the vehicle to help safely remove the injured victim. Charles then ran over 100 yards to get an ATV to help transport the patient along with EMS providers to a helicopter landing zone. Unfortunately, her injuries were fatal. According to his nomination, the young woman's family credits the heroic actions of Charles with providing them the opportunity to comfort her in her final days.

Shannon Wittenberg of Jefferson Torresdale Hospital

Wittenberg began as an Emergency Department nurse who then transitioned part time into the trauma program. During that time, Wittenberg earned her MSN in education and returned to the Emergency Department as a night nurse. Wittenberg has a strong understanding of trauma center standards and has a strong clinical knowledge of evidence-based trauma care. She uses this blend of expertise to mentor new nurses and share her passion. Wittenberg serves as the nurse educator for the Emergency Department and is engaged in promoting trauma care and prevention. She has become a Master Trainer in the Matter of Balance program and is also involved in Stop the Bleed programming.

Dr. Russell Dumire, MD, FACS, of Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center

Dr. Dumire serves as the Trauma Medical Director and Chief of Surgery at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. He joined the staff at Conemaugh after serving in the United States Air Force. According to his colleagues at Conemaugh, Dr. Dumire always remains calm and provides a needed sense of control for all staff members in response to a trauma. His drive for improvement, and never accepting the thought "well, that is the way it always has been", has guided numerous process improvement and research projects. Currently, he is involved in over 2 dozen active research projects as primary investigator to mentoring surgical residents and trauma staff. Dr. Dumire has developed educational programs with the goal of improving care from school injury prevention clinics, to managing severe traumatic brain injuries. Often, Dr. Dumire attends outreach programs at local fire stations, EMS facilities, schools, and community organizations. According to his colleagues, "the region has a stronger trauma system, from prevention, pre-hospital care, acute care management, and a safe return home, thanks to Dr. Dumire."

Dr. Michael J. Reihart, DO, FACEP, FAEMS, of Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health

Dr. Reihart remains committed to reducing trauma in rural communities and supports local EMS agencies. Dr. Reihart currently serves as the President of the ATSPA Board of Directors, as well as the Regional Medical Director to the Emergency Health Services Federation (EHSF) and the Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee to both EHSF and the State Medical Advisory Committee. His service on these committees directly impacts the Emergency Medical Services scope of practice and treatment protocols throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition, Dr. Reihart serves as the Medical Director for multiple EMS agencies including Lancaster EMS and the Special Emergency Response Team of the Lancaster City Police. These roles further influence those who deliver care to the traumatically injured. Dr. Reihart selflessly gives his time and expertise to organizations such as the Lancaster County Amish Safety Committee to improve practice in agriculture safety. Dr. Reihart is a physician on a mission to keep every person out of the trauma bay.