



A MESSAGE FROM THE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

Scott Mall
Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

3408 Covington Highway • Decatur, Georgia • 30032-1513
Telephone: (404) 508-7147 • Fax: (404) 508-7341

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CONTACT:
Jim Shuler
DJJ Communications
(404) 508-7147
JimShuler@djj.state.ga.us

DJJ's Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne Presented With NCCHC's Highest Healthcare Honor

(Atlanta, GA) – Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne, MD, MPH, CCHP, Medical Director with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), is the 2016 recipient of the Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit from the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). Dr. Staples-Horne is being honored for her leadership and advocacy in serving the healthcare needs of youth in custody.

NCCHC's highest honor, the Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit is presented to an individual or group that has demonstrated excellence and service that has advanced the correctional healthcare field, either through an individual project or a history of service. The award is named after NCCHC's co-founder and first president.

DJJ Commissioner Avery D. Niles stated, "On behalf of each DJJ employee, the Board and the youth that DJJ serves, I congratulate Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne on this singular honor." He continued, "Michelle exemplifies the dedication of DJJ's staff to the well-being of the youth that are DJJ's responsibility. She is highly deserving of the Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit."

For nearly 25 years, Dr. Staples-Horne has been a national leader in public health and clinical care for vulnerable juvenile offenders in the correctional system. At DJJ she has consistently advocated for young people and enhanced the care provided to those in the system. She led Georgia's juvenile health system from almost nonexistence to recognition as a leader in healthcare among juvenile corrections agencies.

"I'm very excited and appreciative for the recognition from my colleagues in correctional health," Dr. Staples-Horne said. "It is an honor to receive the NCCHC Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit. He was a trailblazer in correctional health, as I have also tried to be by creating a system of healthcare for youth involved in the Georgia juvenile justice system."

"I am most proud of the public health impact I have made by providing health screenings, dental care, STI treatment, wellness programs, infection control and immunizations to this vulnerable population," Staples-Horne said.

Dr. Staples-Horne was hired as DJJ's first medical director in 1993, charged with developing a healthcare program for more than 1,200 young people in 28 secure facilities as well as more than 15,000 youth in the community, many of them with no or inconsistent health or dental care prior to detainment.

According to Dr. Staples-Horne, "At that time, there were no medical policies, procedures, protocols or quality assurance standards." She continued, "There was no on-site medical staff, dental care or behavioral health services, and very limited nursing services were available at only four facilities."

From that, she created a national model of quality care with policies and protocols based on standards from NCCHC and other organizations. Today, DJJ health services include nursing care, pharmacy services, annual health screenings and assessments, immunizations, dental services, daily sick call, ongoing care for chronic conditions, nutritional services and health education. Current DJJ policy requires that within two hours of admission, all youth are screened for medical and mental health issues, traumatic experience, substance abuse and suicide risk, with a goal of identifying at-risk youth as early as possible and providing the care required.

Dr. Staples-Horne has provided training and consultation to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute of Corrections. Dr. Staples-Horne's published works include several book chapters and articles in *The Lancet*, the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, the *Journal of Adolescent Health* and more. She was also the focus of a CNN article on correctional physicians.

Dr. Staples-Horne is a past president of the American College of Correctional Physicians and in 2013 was awarded the Armond Start Award of Excellence, that organization's highest honor. She also received the Health and Human Services Award for Innovations in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. She earned her medical degree from Morehouse School of Medicine and her master's degree in public health from Emory University.

In summary Niles said of Dr. Staples-Horne, "She has helped develop a unified voice in the field of clinical care for juvenile offender patient populations in Georgia and across the nation."

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The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a multi-faceted agency that serves the needs of this state's young offenders up to the age of 21. The Department employs more than 4,000 men and women at 26 secure facilities and 92 community services offices throughout the state to effect justice and redirect the young lives in the agency's care.

Including those who are placed on probation, more than 50,000 youths are diverted each year to evidence-based community programs, sentenced to short-term incarceration or committed to the Department's long-term custody by the Juvenile Courts. It is the duty of DJJ's professional corrections staff to preserve public safety and safeguard the citizens of Georgia, as well as protect the victims of crimes so that they can rebuild their lives.

DJJ holds juvenile offenders accountable for their delinquent conduct so that they can take responsibility for their actions through probation, supervision and secure detention. At the same time, the youth are provided with medical and psychological treatment, as well as specialized education and programs designed to equip them with the social, intellectual and emotional tools needed to achieve their successful reentry and reintegration into community, workplace and neighborhood settings as more productive and law-abiding citizens.



NCCHC Photo

(Right) DJJ Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne receives the 2016 Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit from the National Commission of Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) for advocacy serving the healthcare needs of youth in custody.

(Left) Edward Harrison, Retired President (2014) of (NCCHC) presents the award.