



## **National Cooperative of Health Networks Association**

### *News Release*

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### **LOCAL LEADER WINS NATIONAL AWARD**

*Esther Hammerschlag (Craig, AK) --- Outstanding New and Emerging Health Network Leader of 2011*

Esther Hammerschlag, Network Director of the Prince of Wales Health Network in Craig, was recognized as the 2011 Outstanding New & Emerging Network Leader of the Year during the 3rd Annual National Cooperative of Health Networks Awards Luncheon held in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Outstanding New & Emerging Network Leader Award recognizes extraordinary leadership activities demonstrated by a health network leader/director who has held the position for less than 5 years.

Current members of the Prince of Wales Health Network are PeaceHealth, SEARHC, State of Alaska Craig Public Health Center, and Alaska Island Community Services. The Prince of Wales Health Network was formed in 2008 out of a mutually recognized need by POW's healthcare providers for increased collaboration to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare services to POW residents. The original goals of the Network were to evaluate the possibility for longer term collaboration through strengthening relationships between the healthcare provider organizations, updating needs assessments for POW, and developing a strategic plan for primary care services on POW.

Under Hammerschlag's skillful leadership, the Network rapidly exceeded expectations, and expanded its objectives to include needs assessment and strategic planning for behavioral health services on POW, market analysis for elder care services on POW, increased support for the Island's EMS system, and formation of a community based behavioral health coalition. Other Network accomplishments include increased visiting specialty clinics, continuing education opportunities for providers, and increased community education about services available on Prince of Wales Island. Most important, the Network has facilitated increased communication and collaboration between the healthcare providers serving the island, community stakeholders, and state agency representatives.

One of the Network's greatest strengths has been in leveraging the collective influence of its members to bring additional resources and funding to Prince of Wales Island. In 2009, when the largest provider of behavioral health services on POW closed its doors, the Network was able to secure funding from the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health to provide island-wide needs assessment and strategic planning for improved behavioral health services to POW. In 2010, the Network received a Service to Science award from CSAP's Center for Application of Prevention Technologies for its work in this area.

The Network has a new, 3 year work plan in place. Goals include support of increased communication and collaboration through strengthening the Network infrastructure, improvement in the entire continuum of behavioral health services on POW from prevention through treatment and aftercare, improved coordination of maternal child health services, increased youth development opportunities, and annual community health education campaigns.

For more information visit the POW Health Network website at [www.princeofwaleshealthnetwork.org](http://www.princeofwaleshealthnetwork.org).