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Minneapolis Pediatrician Receives AMA's Award for Citizenship and Community Service

CHICAGO – The American Medical Association (AMA) presented Peter J. Dehnel, M.D. with its Benjamin Rush Award for Citizenship and Community Service today at its semi-annual policy-making meeting. Dr. Dehnel is a practicing pediatrician in Minneapolis, where he has led local efforts to prevent tobacco use and reduce childhood obesity rates.

“It is an honor to present Dr. Dehnel with this award honoring his public health work to improve the health of Minnesota’s youth by reducing tobacco use and preventing childhood obesity,” said AMA Board Chair Steven J. Stack, M.D. “Dr. Dehnel is a true community leader and role model for his young patients.”

Dr. Dehnel serves as a medical director for utilization management at BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota and continues to support pediatric practices in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. He currently sees patients in the Minneapolis area as well. He also serves as an assistant professor in the department of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota.

A crusader about the danger of second hand smoke on children, Dr. Dehnel testified before legislators and local community leaders early in the 2000s. His efforts led to city ordinances that banned smoking in several cities and a county in the Minneapolis area, and later led to a state-wide smoking ban in 2007.

Dr. Dehnel has served on the board of directors and held other leadership positions for the Twin Cities Medical Society since 2002. As current president of the society, he works with state healthy living programs to reduce childhood obesity. He also partnered with the National Initiative for Children’s Healthcare Quality and the American Academy of Pediatrics to develop the necessary information for physicians to work with families to help their children lead healthier lives.

Dr. Dehnel received his undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Minnesota. He went on to do his residency in pediatrics at the University of Minnesota hospitals and clinics.

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