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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Missouri Rural Health Association Announces Winners of the 2025 Rural Health Excellence Awards**

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – September 17, 2025

Missouri Rural Health Association (MRHA) in partnership with the Missouri Association of Rural Health Clinics, is thrilled to announce the winners of the 2025 Rural Health Excellence Awards. These awards honor those who go above and beyond in addressing the unique challenges faced by rural communities. This year's awards, presented at the Missouri Rural Health Conference by MRHA Executive Director Heidi Lucas, highlight excellence in Innovation, Leadership, and Advocacy.

The 2025 Rural Health Excellence Award winners are:

**Excellence in Innovation Award: Rachel Boyles, Chief Ancillary Officer, Golden Valley Memorial Healthcare**

Rachel Boyles is recognized for her visionary leadership in building a culture of innovation at Golden Valley Memorial Healthcare. Rachel has spearheaded groundbreaking initiatives such as remote monitoring for high-risk pregnancies, at-home asthma care for children, and enhanced patient access through technology-driven scheduling and communication tools. Her inclusive approach ensures every staff member has a voice in shaping innovation, making Golden Valley a national model for people-first healthcare transformation.

**Excellence in Leadership Award: Barb Gleason, Project Director, Bootheel Perinatal Network**

Barb Gleason is honored for her transformative leadership in maternal and child health across southeast Missouri. Barb has expanded access to care through telehealth maternal-fetal medicine services, satellite prenatal diagnostics, and a clinical-community care coordination model that improves outcomes for mothers and babies. She is also recognized for her ability to convene partners across healthcare, community organizations, and state agencies to address disparities, strengthen collaboration, and deliver compassionate, equitable care.

**Excellence in Advocacy Award: Toniann Richard, CEO, HCC Network**

Toniann Richard is celebrated for her tireless advocacy on behalf of rural communities in Missouri and beyond. As CEO of HCC Network, Toniann has been a powerful voice in advancing health equity and influencing policy to expand access to care. Her strategic vision and persistent advocacy have made her a trusted champion for rural health at the local, state, and national levels.

"The Missouri Rural Health Excellence Awards recognize the remarkable individuals who are shaping the future of rural health," said Heidi Lucas, Executive Director of MRHA. "Rachel, Barb,

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and Toniann exemplify the innovation, leadership, and advocacy it takes to improve access, rural equity, and outcomes for rural communities. We are honored to celebrate their achievements.”

MRHA’s mission is to provide leadership on rural priorities through advocacy, partnerships, and education. For more information about MRHA visit [mrhassociation.org](http://mrhassociation.org).

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