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National Minority Quality Forum Announces 2021 Congressional Award Recipients

19TH ANNUAL NMQF LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
CONGRESSIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 16, 2021)—Today, the National Minority Quality Forum (NMQF) announced its 2021 Congressional Award recipients:

**Outstanding Congressional Leader Award**
Congressman Richard Neal
Chair, House Ways & Means Committee

**Outstanding Healthcare Policy Leader Award**
Orriel Richardson, JD, MPH
Healthcare Counsel
House Ways & Means Committee
Outstanding Healthcare Policy Leader Award
Jerry Steffl
Vice President, Federal Affairs
Health Care Services Corporation

NMQF’s Congressional Awards recognize individuals that have made outstanding contributions to healthcare laws, regulations, and policies that increase access to affordable, high-quality health care.

“We have to approach solving these issues of barriers to access to quality healthcare from all angles. How our laws and other governing regulations are written and applied can have a disparate impact on minorities—indeed, they have in many instances,” said Dr. Gary A. Puckrein, President and CEO of NMQF.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve seen the immediate impact of stimulus bills, putting money back into the hands of the Americans who need it most. We’ve seen leaders in health policy like Congressman Richard Neal, who launched the Ways and Means Racial Equity Initiative to address health and economic inequities that present barriers for many people of color and marginalized communities in the United States,” Dr. Puckrein continued.

“The pandemic has laid bare and worsened the health and economic disparities that communities of color experience,” Congressman Richard Neal said.

“As we look ahead, we are committed to building a more just and equitable society that prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable and rights the wrongs of our nation’s history. I am honored to lead the Ways and Means Committee as it brings equity to the forefront of all legislative conversations, and this award from the National Minority Quality Forum is a testament to our hard work,” said Congressman Neal. “I appreciate your partnership in this momentous effort, and together, we will secure a healthier and more prosperous future for all Americans.”

Dr. Puckrein implores advocates to help our elected officials make the best decisions, connecting those who serve the public with important data about their constituents.

“Advocates like Jerry Steffl, who has focused on accessible care for the most vulnerable populations for nearly two decades; and Orriel Richardson, a 2020 NMQF 40 Under 40 Awardee whose contributions to the groundbreaking committee report Left Out: Barriers to Health Equity for Rural and Underserved Communities has helped us understand the
challenges associated with scalable and sustainable solutions to address health inequities and disparities,” he said. “We applaud their work and are honored that they are accepting the 2021 Congressional Award.”

Orriel Richardson said eliminating disparities in health has been a primary focus in her work.

“I am elated to receive this recognition from the National Minority Quality Forum after being selected as a 40 Under 40 Leader in Minority Health last year,” she said. “Staffing health and racial equity work for the Committee on Ways and Means Majority is the highlight of my career. I am grateful for the Chairman’s leadership on these issues and colleagues who also envision a more perfect union.”

Jerry Steffl said he is honored and looks forward to continuing his work.

“We are partnering with providers to move beyond the moral imperative to reduce disparities in care and health to create an enduring focus on durable interventions,” said Jerry Steffl.

Past NMQF Congressional Award recipients include Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett, Congressman Frank Pallone, Waverly Gordon, and Ashley Baker Hayes. Nominations are received from advisors and stakeholders and then chosen by NMQF leadership. The Congressional Awards Ceremony will take place during NMQF’s 2021 Annual Leadership Summit on Health Disparities and Spring Health Braintrust, which will be held virtually this year on April 26-28.

To register or learn more, visit: https://www.nmqf.org/nmqf-events/2021annualsummit.

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About National Minority Quality Forum
The National Minority Quality Forum assists health care providers, professionals, administrators, researchers, policymakers, and community and faith-based organizations in delivering appropriate health care to minority communities. This assistance is based on providing the evidence in the form of science, research, and analysis that will lead to the effective organization and management of system resources to improve the quality and
safety of health care for the entire population of the U.S., including minorities. For more information, please visit www.nmqf.org.