



For Immediate Release
Contact: Jill Sudhoff-Guerin
(802) 917-5817
jsudhoffguerin@vtmd.org

Vermont Medical Society Honors 2021 Leadership Award Winners

*VMS Honors Those who Have Demonstrated Outstanding Service
to Health Care and Community*

Montpelier, Vt. (November 9, 2021) – During its 208th VMS Annual Meeting this past weekend, the Vermont Medical Society (VMS) recognized five individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of Vermonters and the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trey Dobson, M.D., who practices in Bennington, VT, has been selected as the Vermont Medical Society’s Distinguished Service Award winner for 2021. The Distinguished Service Award is the highest award VMS can bestow upon one of its members and is given on the basis of meritorious service in the science and art of medicine and for outstanding contributions to the medical profession, its organizations, and the welfare of the public.

Dr. Dobson was nominated for his unwavering leadership as the Chief Medical Officer of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington, VT to manage his medical staff with compassion, commitment, and candor, and for his tireless mission to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 virus through sharing the most relevant and most accurate information with as many Vermonters as possible. Dr. Dobson’s daily newsletters during the pandemic have been essential for his staff, the broader community, and health care professionals across the state. His consistent communications not only provided critical data and guidance, but also included comical relief and support that helped lift morale during these trying times.

Saeed Ahmed, M.D., practicing in Rutland, VT, received the Vermont Medical Society's Physician of the Year Award for 2021. Dr. Ahmed was selected for his outstanding leadership directing the West Ridge Center methadone/Suboxone hub as a fellowship-trained addiction psychiatrist who develops a positive therapeutic alliance with patients across all diagnostic spectrums. Under his leadership and expertise in delivering patient-centered care, the West Ridge Center was also recognized earlier this year by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). The Physician of the Year Award is granted annually to a physician licensed in the state of Vermont who has demonstrated outstanding performance in the quality of care given to patients; demonstrated skillful and compassionate patient care; and demonstrated dedication to the welfare of patients in accordance with accepted principles of good medical practice.

Kristen Pierce, M.D., who practices in Burlington, VT, has been selected to receive the Physician Award for Community Service for 2021. The Physician Award for Community Service is granted annually to a physician licensed in the state of Vermont who has compiled an outstanding record of community service, which reflects well on the profession. Dr. Pierce has been selected for her outstanding commitment to health equity in her community. Her leadership with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine trial and the countless hours she has devoted to ensuring that immigrants, refugees, black and brown community members and many other community members receive accurate, sensitive, and timely information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine has contributed to the health of all Vermonters.

The Citizen of the Year Award recipient for 2021 is **Christine Finley, RN, MPH**, for her dedication over decades to the health and safety of Vermont's children and communities. Over the last year, Ms. Finley worked tirelessly as the Immunization Program Manager at the Vermont Department of Health to ensure a successful rollout of Vermont's COVID-19 vaccination effort. With Vermont's COVID-19 vaccination rate at the highest in the nation, Ms. Finley has now

returned to her roots to practice as a nurse during our State's health care staffing shortage. The Citizen of the Year Award is given to a non-physician resident of the state of Vermont who in the past and presently has made a significant contribution to the health of the people of Vermont.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter (AAPVT) has been selected to receive the VMS Founder's Award for 2021. The Founders' Award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, vision, and achievement in improving the health of Vermonters and all Americans. The AAPVT Chapter was nominated for having long been on the forefront of advocacy for children's safety and well-being and for championing the needs of Vermont's children and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. AAPVT pediatricians have led by example throughout Vermont and have served as models nationally for pediatricians across the country.

The VMS Physician Leadership Awards for 2021 were presented during a virtual awards ceremony on Friday, November 5th, 2021, as a part of the Vermont Medical Society's 208th Annual Meeting.

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About the Vermont Medical Society: The Vermont Medical Society is the leading voice of physicians in the state and is dedicated to optimizing the health of all Vermonters and the health care environment in which Vermont physicians and physician assistants practice medicine. The Society serves its 2,400 members through public policy advocacy on the state and federal levels, as well as by providing legal, administrative and educational support, producing a rich flow of news and information and offering member benefits that increase medical practice effectiveness and efficiency. For more information, visit www.VTMD.org.