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Medical Association Honors Leadership, Community Service and Wellness Promotion
Two South Mississippi Physicians, Gulf Coast Residential Community Awarded

Ridgeland, Miss. (Thursday, June 14, 2012) – The Mississippi State Medical Association (MSMA) recently honored two South Mississippi physicians and a Gulf Coast residential community at a ceremony for the 2012 Excellence in Medicine Awards. Recipients and respective honors include:

- **Jeffrey A. Morris, MD** – Dr. James C. Waites Leadership Award
- **Robert Travnicek, MD** – MSMA Community Service Award
- **Mariner's Village; Long Beach, Miss.** – MSMA Award for Excellence in Wellness Promotion

The Dr. James C. Waites Leadership Award honors one physician under the age of 50 who is an outstanding leader in organized medicine and community affairs. The Waites Award recipient for 2012, Jeffrey A. Morris MD, of Hattiesburg, is a partner and internal medicine physician at HubSouth Medical Clinic in Hattiesburg and is the Medical Director for the South Mississippi State Hospital, Mississippi Home Care, and Perry County Nursing Home. He is also a staff physician at Forrest General Hospital and at Wesley Medical Center, where he serves on the Continuing Medical Education Committee, Ethics Committee, Medical Executive Committee, and Peer Review Committee. Dr. Morris is a member of the Board of Trustees for Hub Health of South Mississippi, Inc. and member of the Board of Directors for Mississippi Physicians Care Network. In addition to serving on the MSMA Board of Trustees, he has been dedicated to his local component medical society through holding positions of President and Secretary/Treasurer. He is also a member of the Mississippi Medical Political Action Committee, Southern Medical Association, American Medical Association, and American Medical Political Action Committee. His wife Karen is an office holder in the MSMA Alliance organization, and together the Morrices have dedicated many hours to support pro-medicine and community service efforts, including organizing annual 5K charity races sponsored by the Alliance in the Hattiesburg area.
Dr. Robert Travnicek, recipient of the 2012 MSMA Community Service Award, earned his medical, bachelor’s degree and doctorate from the University of Nebraska School of Medicine. After 21 years in private practice as a family physician in rural Nebraska, Dr. Travnicek -- who was by this time married to his wife Lora and had two young daughters -- completed a Masters of Public Health degree at Harvard School of Public Health in 1990 and subsequently moved to Mississippi to become the District Director of Coastal Plains Public Health District IX, where he has served with distinction for over 20 years. His role during the Hurricane Katrina response in 2005 was legendary; he worked tirelessly for two consecutive months without a break in the immediate wake of the worst natural disaster in American history. This service led to his being recognized in 2009 by the Harrison County Emergency Management Agency for “Outstanding Service and Dedication.” He has provided high risk obstetric consultative care in the Harrison County Health Department and has served in several community service capacities. Dr. Travnicek supervised and directed a nationally recognized Stroke Belt Grant Project offering hypertension screening to Coast residents; partnered with the Healthier Communities Alliance Association, Memorial Hospital of Gulfport, local schools, Rotary clubs, churches, and Boards of Supervisors to establish and supervise a mobile medical unit which is currently providing health care screening and immunizations throughout Mississippi coastal counties; helped Memorial Hospital of Gulfport establish school-based clinics; helped to establish a Hazard Analysis and Critical Points checklist for food service facilities to improve environmental health; and served as a guest speaker for Harrison County Chamber of Commerce leadership conferences and U.S. Food and Drug Administration training programs. In addition to the 2012 MSMA Community Service Award, Dr. Travnicek has received the 2004 Felix Underwood Award (given by the Mississippi Public Health Association as the top award for public health service in Mississippi); the 2003 Dean College Presidents Award for Leadership; the 1997 Donald Evans Sutter Award (given by Memorial Hospital of Gulfport for leadership abilities and contributions to community development); the 2007 Orange Grove Rotary Service Award; and the 2009 Gulfport Rotary Service Award.

The 2012 MSMA Excellence in Wellness Promotion award winner, Mariner's Village in Long Beach, is a residential community with a mission to promote wellness and healthy living for its residents. Following Hurricane Katrina, MSMA member John D. McKee, MD, wanted to help residents of the Coast recover and felt that a community focused on health was the best way to start. He collaborated with award-winning developers at Miami-based Pinnacle Housing Group to create a $12 million, state-of-the-art residential community focused on promoting optimal health for its residents. Partially funded by the Mississippi Development Authority, the residence offers health-promoting amenities including a community center, gymnasium, beach volleyball court, walking track, and playground with splash area for children. The community center includes a computer business office, full kitchen, virtual kid's gymnasium, and group meeting area. The center also serves as the gathering place for healthy cooking classes, morning exercise programs, and children's health and educational activities. The residents’ response to the healthy living community is manifested by their markedly improved health and neighborhood pride. Tremendous motivation has been spawned, as residents continue to organize
and participate in volunteer activities, giving back to others in the form of blood drives and helping their community become focused on better health. Mariner's Village is a great success story, showing how a motivated Mississippian produced a unique development that promotes the highest level of wellness for its residents which in turn inspired citizens to make meaningful contributions to their own community.

For more information about the MSMA and its efforts to promote a healthy Mississippi, please visit the association website at [www.MSMAonline.com](http://www.MSMAonline.com).

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**About Mississippi State Medical Association**

*Founded in 1856 and now headquartered in Ridgeland, the Mississippi State Medical Association (MSMA) is a physician organization serving as an advocate for its 4,600-plus members, their patients, and the public health. MSMA promotes ethical, educational, and clinical standards for the medical profession and the enactment of just medical laws, providing a way for members of the medical profession to unite and act on matters affecting public health and the practice of medicine. For more information on the MSMA, please visit [www.MSMAonline.com](http://www.MSMAonline.com).*