

NOV. 14, 2024

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DR. THOMAS IRONS HONORED FOR HIS TIRELESS WORK WITH COMMUNITY FREE-CLINICS

Greenville – The North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFCC) recently recognized Dr. Thomas Irons with its Spirit of Free and Charitable Clinics Award, celebrating his “sacrifice, compassion and contributions.”

Irons, the Access East chief medical officer, was one of three individuals honored at the NCAFCC’s annual conference Oct. 24-25 in Concord, N.C., for their significant work on behalf of the clinics they serve.

Though having officially retired in 2022 from a celebrated career as an ECU Brody School of Medicine professor and pediatric physician, Irons continues to oversee the Pitt County Care free-clinic organization, as he has for more than 23 years. Its newest facility opened Sept. 10 in west Greenville’s JOY Community Center; named in his honor, the Dr. Irons HealthAssist Clinic is managed by Access East’s HealthAssist Uninsured Network.

The annual NCAFCC awards highlight the critical roles of staff and volunteers in the organization’s 69 member clinics, nonprofit organizations providing healthcare to an estimated 75,000 uninsured and underinsured patients across 85 of N.C.’s 100 counties.

“Selfless leaders and volunteers ... committed to giving back to their communities are the heart and soul of North Carolina’s free and charitable clinics,” April Cook, the NCAFCC CEO, noted at October’s event.

Irons has frequently been recognized for his lifelong advocacy of health-care access for the uninsured; he has also received the Jim Bernstein Community Health Career Achievement Award, as well as the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, N.C.’s highest civilian honor.

The NCAFCC’s other 2024 award recipients are retired primary-care physician Dr. Lisa Nadler, honored for her volunteer work with Senior PharmAssist in Durham; and Brittany Bonn, executive director of Helping Hands Clinic in Lenoir, honored for her outstanding leadership.



Dr. Thomas Irons, holding his NCAFCC award with the HealthAssist Uninsured Network team at the west Greenville clinic named in his honor. Award close-up, at right.

