

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024

Contact: Ryan Weiss, MPA marketing and communications manager

Phone: (517) 377-0232

Email: [RWeiss@MichiganPharmacists.org](mailto:RWeiss@MichiganPharmacists.org)

**MPA Bestows Top Awards at Annual Convention & Exhibition in Detroit**

DETROIT — The Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) is proud to announce its distinguished yearly award winners, which were presented Saturday, Feb. 24, at the MPA Annual Convention & Exposition (ACE) at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. MPA, its practice settings, affiliated chapters and other related organizations annually present a variety of prestigious awards to recognize pharmacy professionals and individuals/organizations supportive of the pharmacy profession.

**MPA Pharmacist of the Year**

Larry D. Wagenknecht, Haslett



The MPA Pharmacist of the Year Award is presented annually as the highest honor in Michigan pharmacy. This lifetime achievement honor is given to a pharmacist who demonstrates professional excellence and exemplary service to the profession in advancing public health at either the state or local level and displays all the traits and characteristics of someone with a true commitment to advancing the pharmacy profession and public health.

Larry D. Wagenknecht served on the MPA staff from 1983 to 2021. He was appointed MPA executive director in 1986 and was named CEO in 1994. Wagenknecht served as CEO until his retirement in 2021. He received his bachelor's degree in pharmacy from the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy in 1979 and is a licensed pharmacist and pharmacy preceptor in the state of Michigan. He served as adjunct clinical faculty for the colleges of pharmacy at the University of Michigan and Ferris State University.

Wagenknecht currently serves as chairman of the Michigan Health Information Network Shared Services board. He also served as member of the board of governors of the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board and chair of the Michigan Healthcare Stakeholders Opioid Stewardship Collaborative. He also served as the 2000-01 president of the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations (NASPA) and served as secretary and governor of the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy Board of Governors.

He has also served on numerous other committees and task forces with the state of Michigan, including the Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Task Force and Commission, Michigan Patient Safety Commission and the Michigan Health Information Technology Commission. Wagenknecht and his wife Amy live in Haslett and have two sons: Bryan, of Boston, and Jonathan, of Austin, Texas. They also have two granddaughters, Anna and Mabel, in Boston.

**Bowl of Hygeia Award**  
Douglas Samojedny, New Baltimore



The Bowl of Hygeia derives its name from the Greek goddess of the same name, who was the goddess of health, cleanliness and hygiene. Hygeia was the daughter and assistant of Asklepios, the god of medicine and healing. Her classical symbol was a bowl containing a medicinal potion, with the serpent of wisdom (or guardianship) partaking of it. The Bowl of Hygeia is given to a pharmacist who has made outstanding professional contributions and has participated in community or governmental activities that reflect well on the profession.

A 1981 Ferris State University graduate and metro Detroit native, Douglas Samojedny began his career at Nortown Drugs on 7 Mile and Ryan roads in Detroit, a pharmacy he owned and operated along with his father and brother. In 2012, he was tasked by Henry Ford Health System to lead Pharmacy Advantage, where he is now the director of specialty pharmacy operations. Before arriving at Henry Ford, he worked at Detroit Osteopathic Hospital and Macomb Hospital (now known as Ascension).

Samojedny has made significant contributions to his community, such as organizing community health fairs, conducting brown bag visits, giving lectures at local senior centers, providing education for CMH employees, organizing drug take-back events and participating in charity events to support disease state research. He has served on the board of the Wayne County Pharmacists Association since 1983. He has held several positions within MPA, such as vice speaker and speaker of the House of Delegates, as well as Executive Board member. He has also served on the Pharmacy PAC board, Third Party Insurance Committee and Local Association Development Committee. In 1996, he was inducted into the MPA Hall of Honor and has received his 40-year membership pin.

Nationally, he is active with the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and the National Associations of Specialty Pharmacy. Samojedny has received numerous awards for his contributions to the profession, including the John Webster Award. He said while his earlier awards were all meaningful, his nomination for the Bowl of Hygeia was unexpected and he is greatly humbled by the honor.

Douglas and his wife of 37 years, Cynthi, have three daughters, Amber, Brittany and Heather.

**Executive Board Medal**  
*Michael Toscano, Elk Rapids*

The Executive Board Medal Award is given annually to an individual who has demonstrated an extraordinary personal commitment to MPA. The award was developed to recognize individuals who have been instrumental to the Executive Board and to the Association in advancing pharmacy's agenda.



Michael Toscano began his involvement with MPA in 2000 as a member of the Michigan Pharmaceutical Representative Society, an affiliate of MPA. As a delegate for that affiliate, Toscano was elected MPA's House of Delegates vice speaker in 2005. This also earned him a spot on MPA's executive board. In 2008, he was elected speaker of the house and served on the executive board from 2005 to 2010.

Toscano was awarded MPA's Fred W. Arnold Public Relations Award in 2015 and is a member of the Pharmacy Hall of Honor. Recently retired from the pharmaceutical industry, Toscano and his wife, Jan, live an active life in Elk Rapids.

### **Excellence in Innovation Award**

*Amber Lanae Martirosov, Troy*



The Excellence in Innovation Award is presented annually to an individual or team that has demonstrated an innovative pharmacy practice program, resulting in improved patient care or safety, advancement of the profession, enhanced systems or other professional development.

Amber Lanae Martirosov is an associate clinical professor of pharmacy practice at Wayne State University Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She is also a clinical specialist of ambulatory care and pulmonary medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. She also serves as the residency program director for PGY2 residents in ambulatory care at Henry Ford Hospital. Martirosov earned her Doctor of Pharmacy at Virginia Commonwealth University College of Pharmacy in 2011. She then completed a Masters of Pharmacotherapy and Residency at the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2013. Martirosov also received her board certification in pharmacotherapy in 2013 and ambulatory care in 2018.

Martirosov recently designed and implemented a pharmacist-led pharmacotherapy monitoring clinic focused on managing high-risk pulmonary patients with interstitial lung disease. The clinic provides comprehensive therapy management, medication access/adherence assistance and patient education. The clinic serves as a training site for both pharmacy residents and students.

### **Distinguished New Pharmacist Practitioner Award**

*Brooke Roe, Byron Center*

The Distinguished New Pharmacist Practitioner Award is presented annually to a member pharmacist who has been licensed to practice for less than 10 years and participates in local, state and national pharmacy associations, professional programs and/or community service.



Brooke Roe is the manager of pharmacy quality and accreditation at Meijer in Grand Rapids. She graduated from Ferris State University in 2014, completed a PGY-1 community-based pharmacy residency with Meijer,

Ferris State University and Pfizer in 2015. In 2016, she became a board-certified pharmacotherapy specialist.

Roe currently serves as the chair of the Michigan Society of Community Pharmacists (MSCP) Board of Directors and the president of the Kent County Pharmacists Association. Roe was president of the MSCP board in 2023. She lives in Byron Center with her husband, Tyler, and children, Mackenzie and Chase.

### **Fred W. Arnold Public Relations Award**

*Nada Farhat, Dearborn*

This award is presented to a member or team of members who have shown outstanding achievement and dedication to the pharmacy profession through community education and awareness.



Nada Farhat is an ambulatory care clinical pharmacist specialist at Michigan Medicine. Farhat completed her Doctor of Pharmacy at Wayne State University and her pharmacy practice and ambulatory care specialty residencies at Michigan Medicine. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Michigan Society of Health-System Pharmacists (MSHP) and participates in several statewide health care initiatives.

She has been an active leader on the MSHP Ambulatory Care Committee, in addition to strategic planning and collaborative practice workgroups for MPA. She also serves as a clinical lead for the Michigan Institute for Care Management and Transformation. Through this role, Farhat helps strengthen patient engagement throughout Michigan by providing support to physician organizations and other health care professionals working on collaborative quality initiatives.

She is currently a member of the education workgroup for the INHALE CQI that focuses on improving care and reducing disparities for patients with asthma and COPD. Farhat continues to advocate for patients to improve medication access and ultimately provide the most equitable and optimal patient care.

Other MPA awards that were presented Saturday or at other events include:

- **Fellow of MPA** – The designation Fellow of Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) recognizes the honoree's achievements and dedication to the practice of pharmacy and the community. This distinction signifies the recipient's actions well beyond regular pharmacy practice. The fellowship is divided into three areas: professional actions in practice, public service and Association participation, all of which help define a well-rounded pharmacist. Recipients receive an exclusive lapel pin, a certificate and recognition in *Michigan Pharmacist*. This year's recipients are Katie Axford, of Rockford; Courtney Biehl, of Sparta; Sara Brown, of Lowell; Carol Bugdalski-Stutrud, of Walled Lake; Bradley Haan of Madison Heights; Miranda Maitland, of Sault Ste. Marie; and Brooke Roe, of Byron Center.

- **Pharmacy Hall of Honor** – The Pharmacy Hall of Honor was established by MPA in 1986 to recognize members who have provided volunteer leadership in service to the Association by participating on committees and in designated Association programs. In addition to the individual's name being displayed in the Pharmacy Hall of Honor at the MPA office, the recipient receives an exclusive lapel pin to signify the accomplishment. This year's inductees are Joseph Fakhoury, of Okemos; Sheroyl Kirby, of Three Rivers; Amber Lanae Martirosov, of Troy; Mary Beth O'Connell of Waterford; Heather Schalk, of Haslett; Kyle Schmidt, of Grand Rapids; Jesse Shuster, of Windsor, Ontario; Sahar Swidan, of Saline; Jamie Tharp, of Ann Arbor; and Thomas Tomaski, of Gaylord.
- **Michigan Society of Community Pharmacists (MSCP) Pharmacist of the Year** – Amy Ellis, of Hudsonville
- **Michigan Society of Pharmacy Technicians (MSPT) Technician of the Year** – Batoul Jaber, Dearborn Heights
- **Consultant and Specialty Pharmacists of Michigan (CSPM) Pharmacist of the Year** – Mark Bomia, of Canton.
- **Michigan Society of Health-System Pharmacists (MSHP) Pharmacist of the Year** – Brandon Flues, of Holly. This award was presented at [the MSHP Annual Meeting in October](#).
- **Legislator of the Year Award** – Sen. Sylvia Santana, D-Warrendale, and Rep. Alabas Farhat, D-Dearborn.
- **Good Public Health Policy Award** – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.
- **Hank Fuhs Good Government Award** – Amy Ellis, of Hudsonville; Rep. Jim Lilly, R-Park Township; and Michael Klepser, of Kalamazoo.
- **Ernie Koch Striving for Excellence Award** – Jennifer Priziola, of Macomb.

Headshot photographs of these award winners are available by request.

### **About Michigan Pharmacists Association**

*The Michigan Pharmacists Association strives to serve members by providing support, advocacy and resources that ultimately improve patient care, safety, health and the practice of pharmacy. For more information, visit [MichiganPharmacists.org](http://MichiganPharmacists.org).*