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## INTERCARE CEO HONORED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

InterCare Community Health Network President and CEO Velma Hendershott has been honored with the 2022 Lifetime Achievement in Migrant Health Award by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). The award was given at the Conference for Agricultural Worker Health on May 2, in Denver, CO.

Velma has long been a leader in migrant and community health. As a child of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, she worked in the fields and learned about the difficulty farmworkers had trying to get health care for themselves and their families. Her parents settled in southwest Michigan and volunteered in clinics to provide services to farmworkers. In 1977 Velma joined what became InterCare, and in 1986 she was named CEO. Over the years, as well as running InterCare, she has been a passionate advocate for community health centers from the local level to state capitols, the U.S. Congress and the White House, including leadership roles with NACHC and the Michigan Primary Care Association.

At the presentation, Velma thanked many people and dedicated the award to her parents. “I think of my parents,” she said, “who instilled in all of us the value of service, compassion, a strong work ethic, the importance of education and a passion for helping others.”

Today InterCare Community Health Network serves over 50,000 patients in rural, urban and migrant communities. In 2022 it is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year and is the largest provider of healthcare to Michigan’s agricultural workers. As well as medical care, InterCare provides dental care, behavioral health care, and WIC services in Bangor, Benton Harbor, Eau Claire, Holland and Pullman.

“We take pride in recognizing colleagues who have done so much on behalf of our migrant and seasonal agricultural workers,” said Rachel Gonzales-Hanson, interim President and CEO of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). “Each in their own way has shown what it takes to make health care meaningful and responsive for this vital part of the

nation’s workforce under extraordinary challenges. These honorees have lifted barriers to care and advanced equity during an unprecedented global pandemic. We celebrate their service, courage, and contributions to the Community Health Center Movement.”

Community and Migrant Health Centers serve approximately 22 percent (nearly one million) of agricultural workers and their families currently living in the U.S. Throughout the pandemic, health centers have responded to the health needs of the nation’s essential agricultural workers who harvest the food on our table and who have suffered disproportionately higher rates of infection and death from the COVID-19 virus.

*About National Association of Community Health Centers*

Established in 1971, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) serves as the leading national voice for America’s Health Centers and as an advocate for health care access for the medically underserved and uninsured. To learn more visit [www.NACHC.org](http://www.NACHC.org).

*About InterCare Community Health Network*

InterCare Community Health Network is a federally qualified health center that also receives a federal grant to provide primary medical and dental care to under-served communities and migrant and seasonal farmworkers. InterCare also provides mental health and addiction services and operates the WIC program in several west Michigan communities. Founded in 1972, InterCare operates sites in Bangor, Benton Harbor, Eau Claire, Holland, and Pullman and has a child and adolescent health center at the Benton Harbor High School. For more information about their current services and hours of operation, visit InterCare’s website at [www.intercare.org](http://www.intercare.org) or find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/InterCareCommunityHealthNet>.

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