



CONTACT:
Courtney Kreuzwiesner
(602) 570-9291

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 14, 2008

Executive Director Honored with AzPHA's Commitment to Underserved People Award

PHOENIX—Catherine Amiot, Mission of Mercy Arizona Executive Director, has been awarded the “Commitment to Underserved People (CUP) Award” by the Arizona Public Health Association (AzPHA). The award is meant to honor persons or entities that have demonstrated a sustained effort in assuring the delivery of health services to underserved populations in Arizona.

According to nomination criteria, underserved people are those who face barriers to accessing services because they have difficulty paying for services, have language or cultural barriers, have insufficient resources in the community, have disparities in health status, are homeless, or are at-risk school children.

Mission of Mercy (MOM), a non-sectarian, non-profit organization has been serving the Valley since 1997, taking a mobile medical unit to host sites in various neighborhoods throughout Maricopa County to provide free medical care and prescriptions to the uninsured and working poor. Staffed with more than 225 volunteer physicians, nurses and interpreters, the mobile clinic currently operates at three sites in Phoenix and one in Mesa.

Amiot has served as Executive Director since May 2004.

Marisue Garganta, Director of Community Health Integration for St. Joseph's Hospital/Catholic Healthcare West, serves on the MOM Leadership Council and nominated Amiot for the award.

“The CUP Award is a very important acknowledgement as it represents an organization's commitment to serving the most vulnerable people in our community. In today's economy, these organizations are playing a greater role in meeting these growing needs,” said Garganta. “This award heightens the awareness of the need of the underserved in Arizona and honors those who continue to make this their key priority and commitment. On behalf of the Arizona Public Health Association, it is our privilege to honor organizations like Mission of Mercy for their commitment.”

Since serving as Executive Director, Amiot has helped the organization adopt a new fundraising model to improve its ability to attain sustainable funding for long-term expansion efforts. MOM opened its fourth clinic site this past summer in south central Phoenix and has begun the process of identifying and commencing service at a new site in the far West Valley by early spring 2009.

"I am honored to accept this award on behalf of Mission of Mercy and those we serve," said Amiot. "For the majority of our patients who come through our doors, being sick is not an inconvenience; it's a catastrophe. Our goal is to remove the traditional barriers that prohibit the working poor from accessing health care and get them the medical help they need so that they can return to their jobs and their families."

Amiot emphasized the importance of the organization's volunteers to attaining that goal. "We could never do our jobs without the tireless efforts of our extraordinary volunteers who generously give of their time to serve our patients with dignity and compassion. They are the heartbeat of Mission of Mercy."

Since opening its doors, MOM has provided no-cost medical care to more than 40,000 patients and conducted 100,000 individual patient visits to families who otherwise would have sought primary health care services at local hospital emergency rooms or who would have simply gone without critically needed medical attention.

Arizona has the fourth highest uninsured population in the country, according the U.S. Census Bureau.

Amiot came to MOM after 25 years in the public and private sector in Arizona, Washington, D.C. and Europe. From 1993-1997, Amiot was a senior management consultant in the Governor's Office for Excellence in Government specializing in state Boards and Commissions. From 1997 to 2000, Amiot served as the executive director for the private funding, design and execution of the non-profit public/private partnership and international grand opening of Kartchner Caverns State Park, a world-class environmental natural wonder in southeastern Arizona.

Mission of Mercy was one of two organizations in the state to receive the CUP Award this year. St. Elizabeth Health Center in Tucson also was selected.

###

About Mission of Mercy

Mission of Mercy is a non-sectarian Valley non-profit organization that takes a mobile medical unit to host sites in various neighborhoods throughout Maricopa County to serve the uninsured and working poor. Mission of Mercy celebrated its 10th year of service in Arizona in 2007, and is funded entirely through private donations to provide free health care and prescription drugs to under- and uninsured individuals and families in Arizona. All services are free and no one is denied service due to inability to pay. Staffed with volunteer physicians, nurses and interpreters, a mobile clinic regularly operates at three sites in Phoenix and one in Mesa, with plans for expansion underway. Mission of Mercy was founded in 1994 and also operates in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Texas. Mission of Mercy seeks to restore dignity to all people by being an instrument of "healing through Love," and by the reciprocal sharing of God's mercy with those we serve. For further information, or to volunteer, call 602-288-7234 or visit www.amissionofmercy.org/arizona.