



National Center for Healthcare Leadership
Leading 21st century healthcare

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**NCHL NAMES TRUMAN MEDICAL CENTERS PRESIDENT & CEO
JOHN W. BLUFORD, III
RECIPIENT OF 2013 GAIL L. WARDEN LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE
AWARD**

CHICAGO, JUNE 13 2013 – The National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL), a not-for-profit that works to improve population health by enhancing the capacity of healthcare leaders, has named John W. Bluford, III, president & chief executive officer of Truman Medical Centers, Inc. (TMC) in Kansas City, MO as recipient of its 2013 *Gail L. Warden Leadership Excellence Award*, recognizing the innovation he has brought to the delivery of high quality and accessible healthcare services to his community, permanently transforming the field.

Bluford is recognized for his commitment to safety-net organizations and for his creativity in improving the lives of vulnerable populations. He is lauded for creating “thinking outside-of-the-bed,” an outreach program that seeks to move outside the four walls of the hospital and bring health management, wellness, and preventive medicine into surrounding neighborhoods. Programs include a health and wellness center in an urban core library branch, weekly fresh produce markets held at TMC hospital campuses to make healthier eating choices readily available to patients, visitors, staff, and the surrounding community, a mobile produce market

that makes nine weekly stops to bring fresh produce directly into the urban core and surrounding areas, and extensive outreach to help patients learn to navigate the healthcare system thereby reducing dependence on emergency care. Bluford is also recognized for his tenure as chair of the American Hospital Association (AHA) in 2011 and his work to promote a culture of health and wellness to healthcare executives around the world, urging them to focus on quality outcomes and community health as a measure of success rather than on the number of beds and patient days.

“With his illustrious career, John Bluford has distinguished himself as a healthcare visionary for his focus on promoting and elevating safety-net organizations. He has demonstrated a tireless commitment to serve the at-risk populations by working to improve the quality of care, quality of the healing environment, and the quality of the workforce,” said Peter W. Butler, NCHL Board chair, and president and chief operating officer of Rush University Medical Center. “He is widely respected for mentoring numerous individuals, many of whom have gone on to other leadership positions. Additionally, John’s leadership extended into improving organizational performance by hiring an outstanding executive team, reforming financial controls to increase revenues, and raising \$65 million in a bond initiative to finance key purchase and construction projects. All of these efforts underscore the potential for safety-net hospitals to achieve financial excellence, expand the delivery of high quality healthcare and forever improve the health of those served.”

Bluford joined TMC, a two-hospital non-profit, level-one trauma center and academic medical center with annual net patient revenues of \$450 million, in 1999. He is credited with a complete turnaround of the institution’s corporate culture and financial operation, receiving many awards along the way, including the University HealthSystem Consortium Top Performer in 2005. TMC’s 4,000 full-time employees care for over 500,000 outpatient visits, 22,000 in-patient admissions, and 104,000 emergency room visits annually. Prior to his work at TMC, Bluford was Chief Executive Officer of Hennepin County Medical Center for six years where he directed a financial turnaround, oversaw construction of a new

orthopedics unit, birthing and perinatal center, women's center, and a \$20 million filmless medical imaging project. Earlier in his career he worked in several other healthcare positions. Bluford attended Harvard University's Executive Program in Health System Management, 1981; he received an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, 1975; and a BA in Biology, from Fisk University, 1971.

Bluford is a member of the Board of Directors of the Joint Commission Resources; a member of the Board of Trustees of Fisk University; a member of the Board of Directors, Delta Dental of Minnesota and member of the Board of Directors, H&R Block Bank. He is also the former chair of the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems Board of Trustees. Bluford has received numerous awards including the 2013 *Modern Healthcare* CEO IT Achievement Award, the National Minority Quality Forum's Booker T. Washington Award in 2012, and in 2012 he was named one of the 40 Most Powerful People In Healthcare by *Becker's Hospital Review*.

NCHL's selection committee for the *Gail L. Warden Leadership Excellence Award* was co-chaired by Jeffrey D. Selberg, Institute for Healthcare Improvement and Christy Harris Lemak, PhD, NCHL and the University of Michigan. It also included Joel T. Allison, Baylor Health Care System; Melinda L. Estes, MD, Saint Luke's Health System; Stuart Guterman, The Commonwealth Fund; Leon L. Haley, Jr., MD, Emory University & Grady Health System; Douglas D. Hawthorne, Texas Health Resources; Gary S. Kaplan, MD, Virginia Mason Medical Center; Mitchell H. Katz, MD, Los Angeles, County Health Department; Margaret E. O'Kane, National Committee for Quality Assurance; Bruce Siegel, MD, National Association of Public Hospitals; Sharon Schweikhart, PhD The Ohio State University; and Gail L. Warden, Henry Ford Health System.

Bluford will be honored on Tuesday November 19, 2013 at an award dinner at the W Chicago City Center where he will be presented with an original glass sculpture by Czech-born artist Martin Rosol. This celebration, which brings together healthcare's luminaries and notable leaders from the nation's prominent

health sector, academic, and research organizations, will be held in conjunction with NCHL's annual Human Capital Investment Conference, which will showcase effective and innovative practices for the development of future leaders.

ABOUT THE GAIL L. WARDEN LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

The *Gail L. Warden Leadership Excellence Award* of the National Center for Healthcare Leadership is awarded annually to individuals who have made significant contributions to the health field, including the mentoring of future leaders towards the goal of transforming organizational performance and improving health and healthcare in the U.S. It is named for Gail L. Warden, founding chairman of the NCHL Board, Chairman Emeritus of Henry Ford Health System, and one of healthcare's foremost leaders. The NCHL leadership award was established in 2005.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP

The National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL) is a not-for-profit organization that is an industry catalyst to ensure the availability of accountable and transformational healthcare leadership for the 21st century. Its vision is to improve population health through leadership and organizational excellence. NCHL operates in partnership with Rush University Medical Center and the University of Michigan. For more information please visit NCHL's website at www.nchl.org.