



NEWS RELEASE

(For immediate release)

LaVaughn Palma-Davis named recipient of the HERO Bill Whitmer Leadership Award

Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate leadership in enhancing workplace health and well-being

WACONIA, MN (September 13, 2017) — HERO (the [Health Enhancement Research Organization](#)) announced today that LaVaughn Palma-Davis, senior director of university health and well-being services at the University of Michigan, has been chosen as the recipient of the [Bill Whitmer Leadership Award](#) for 2017.

The award, which recognizes sustained leadership in enhancing acceptance, effectiveness, and accountability in workplace health and well-being, is one of the HERO Workplace Health and Well-Being Awards given annually at the [HERO Forum](#) to honor dedication and commitment to the well-being industry, and to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of leaders in the field.

With more than 25 years' experience in the fields of health care administration and health promotion, Palma-Davis has been a strong proponent of the value of investing in health and well-being for employees, patients, and the community. In her role at the University of Michigan, Palma-Davis provides leadership for over 80 employees and numerous partners in wellness and risk reduction programs, employee assistance counseling services, occupational health clinical services, and health culture and environment. LaVaughn was the original architect of [MHealthy](#), an ambitious effort to integrate University resources to promote the health and well-being of more than 105,000 faculty, staff, dependents, and retirees on four campuses and throughout the University health system. MHealthy also provides wellness and risk reduction services to [Michigan Medicine](#) patients to support the organization's population health management goals.

Palma-Davis is also a co-founder of [Project Healthy Schools](#) (PHS), a University of Michigan-community collaboration designed to reduce childhood obesity and its long-term health risks by encouraging healthy habits. PHS, currently active in more than 70 middle schools across Michigan, is one of the only school-based programs that has demonstrated significant improvements in both health behavior and cardiovascular risk factors.

“LaVaughn has been a tireless advocate for demonstrating the benefits of health and well-being in the workplace and the broader community,” said [Paul Terry](#), president and CEO of HERO. “LaVaughn's work demonstrates that well-being has value beyond reducing claims costs. She has been instrumental in making this philosophy an integral part of the University of Michigan

and surrounding community. Her steadfast and gracious leadership style makes her a natural fit for the Bill Whitmer Leadership Award.”

Outside of her professional duties, Palma-Davis continues to inspire and motivate her colleagues in the health and well-being industry. Palma-Davis, a past HERO board president, helped develop the [HERO University Summit](#) in 2013 to give human resource and well-being professionals at universities an opportunity to come together to discuss well-being issues that are unique to academic settings.

“The well-being field is full of inspiring leaders who are committed to improving the health and well-being of people and the communities in which they live, so it is an honor to receive this recognition from an organization like HERO,” said Palma-Davis. “I have thoroughly enjoyed my work at the University of Michigan. It has given me an opportunity to use my knowledge, skills and heart to achieve an incredible vision — to make U-M a model community of health where people thrive. I am so fortunate to work with a wonderful team of talented and caring professionals in accomplishing this goal.”

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About HERO – Based in Waconia, MN, HERO (the Health Enhancement Research Organization) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation that was established in 1996. HERO is dedicated to identifying and sharing best practices that improve the health and well-being of employees, their families and communities. To learn more, visit www.hero-health.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#) @HEROehm or [LinkedIn](#).