



Distinguished Service Award Winners

The CAHF Distinguished Service Award recognizes individual members who have demonstrated an exceptional ongoing commitment to the goals of the California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF). This award is given annually to members who exhibit an understanding of the long-term care profession and the challenges it faces, while fostering the highest professional ideals.

Previous Winners

2025

Tony Hunter

From his start in a facility's dietary department to 15+ years as an administrator, Tony Hunter now serves as CFO of Vista Pacifica Enterprises, supporting a network of independently owned homes. A trusted leader in the San Bernardino/Riverside Chapter, he has served as Secretary, Treasurer, and Chapter President. Tony is also an active voice on CAHF's Bylaws Committee and GR Payment Subcommittee, and has served as Sergeant at Arms for the House of Delegates. Widely respected for his reliability and service, Tony exemplifies the spirit of commitment that strengthens CAHF and the long-term care profession.



Mike Williams

Mike Williams has been a driving force in long-term care for more than 50-years, transforming struggling facilities into models of excellence. In San Diego, he helped launch the first-ever CNA Conference and Senior Games programs that still thrive today. Mike has held key leadership roles across multiple organizations as both an Executive Director and Regional Executive. His contributions to CAHF are extensive, serving as: Chapter President, Region 5 Chair, Chair of the Payment Subcommittee, facilitating the Rate Development Advisory Workgroup, and Chair of the CAHF Board during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mike is a nationally recognized voice in long-term care finance, a tireless mentor and advocate. He serves CAHF at every level—fostering new leaders and advancing the association's mission to improve care for residents statewide.



Previous Winners

2024

Debra Donovan

During her 30+ year career in the long-term care sector, Debra Donovan has committed herself to the residents and staff at Valley Village. She has proven herself as an experienced executive director with a demonstrated history in business development, staff development, program development and fundraising. With a passion for serving those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Debra serves as an instrumental provider representative on the California Department of Health Care Services Intermediate Care Facility for Developmentally Disabled Managed Care Carve-in Workgroup. Her involvement has been critical in helping the State understand this sector, develop appropriate policy, and understand the operation challenges of such a massive delivery system change. Debra has also been a member of the California Department of Developmental Services Task Force that provides guidance and advisory feedback on service delivery to Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She has served in a variety of leadership roles representing the sector and is a central member of CAHF's Developmental Services Conference Officers.



Previous Winners

2023

Allan Engelauf

For more than 15 years, Allan Engelauf has dedicated his career to the long-term care sector. Serving in multiple roles, he's currently Executive Vice President for Vista Pacifica Enterprises and Nursing Home Administrator for Vista Pacifica Convalescent. During his time with Vista Pacifica Enterprises, two facilities – Vista Pacifica Center and Vista Pacifica Convalescent – earned a combined total of four American Health Care Association Bronze – Commitment to Quality Awards and Silver – Commitment to Quality Awards, culminating in the American Health Care Association's prestigious Gold – Excellence in Quality Award in 2019.



Patti Garibaldi

Patti Garibaldi is helping shape the future of long-term care. Since 1997, she has been director of clinical consulting for Consonus Healthcare. With more than 30 years of nursing experience, she is nationally recognized for long-term care training. Garibaldi has been teaching QCHF's Director of Nurses/Nurse Leadership Seminar for many years, even playing a role in the development of the curriculum. Additionally, Garibaldi has been on the Nurses Council since 2007.



Previous Winners

2022

Margarita Kechichian

Since 2013, Margarita Kechichian has been the Executive Director of the Ararat Nursing Facility (Ararat) in Mission Hills. In 2017, she further expanded her leadership skills by completing CAHF's Nursing Home Leader Academy. Featuring Kechichian and Ararat, a short documentary film called, "Closed Doors, Open Hearts: Nursing Homes and COVID-19," provided an intimate look at the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tireless efforts to keep residents and caregivers safe. Under her guidance, the facility has received multiple awards from CAHF and the American Health Care



Mark Payne

Mark Payne plays a pivotal role behind the scenes in CAHF's partnership with HPSI. Currently, Payne works with both the Sacramento and Sierra Chapters. Additionally, since 2018, Payne has been the convention committee chair. Always willing to help, he continually goes above and beyond by taking on a multitude of tasks that someone in a leadership role might otherwise delegate to their team. Payne approaches every request with a smile and a desire to help



Previous Winners

2021

Lori Cooper

As a former administrator at Stonebrook Healthcare in Concord, Lori and her team obtained the state's first AHCA Gold, Excellence in Programming Award. Lori is a licensed administrator in three states and has served on numerous CAHF committee's and leadership position culminating with her service as Chair of the Board of Directors.



Ron Wall

With more than 30 years of experience in long term care, Ron has been a program director, administrator, corporate consultant and owner. He serves as the vice chair of the CAHF Political Action Committee and has been a long-time participant in the Public Advocacy Committee. Ron is an active participant in association political activities and a generous supporter of CAHF.

