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Eliza Currie, PA-C Receives Outstanding Rural Physician Assistant Award

PATTEN, ME – May 5, 2008 – Eliza Currie, PA-C was named *Outstanding Rural Physician Assistant of the Year* by the DownEast Association of Physician Assistants (DEAPA).

Eliza's family, fiancé, friends and colleagues attended the Association's annual honors breakfast meeting at Maine Medical Association in Manchester (Maine) on Saturday, April 26.

The *Outstanding Rural Physician Assistant Award* is presented each year to a Maine physician assistant in recognition of dedicated service to a rural community, both as a health care provider and as a citizen.

Nominations are made to DEAPA's chair of the Awards Committee by submitting a letter to the organization's committee describing why the nominee deserves the award, including information about his or her style of practice and community activities that qualify them for the award, including education and training, current employment, other attributes and personal information about family and hobbies.

The Awards Committee presents the slate of nominees to DEAPA's board of directors who determines the final selection.

Eliza is licensed with the state of Maine and professionally associated with the American Academy of Physician Assistants and Downeast Association of Physician Assistants.

A native of Bangor, she received her Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of New England in Portland, Maine. Eliza completed post-baccalaureate course work in nursing at the University of Montana in Missoula and earned her Bachelor of Science degree *summa cum laude* from the University of Maine at Orono where she majored in kinesiology with a concentration in health and fitness.

Throughout her training, she demonstrated a strong sense of teamwork, always eager to learn and acquire new skills. Currie's scholastic honors include the Dean's List during her full-time undergraduate semesters at the University of Maine, the Presidential Academic Achievement Award, and membership in Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi and Golden Key National Scholastic Honor Societies. She obtained her national physician assistant certification in November 2005.

Upon completing her educational goals, Currie launched her personal goal to work with Maine's underserved population, and with the full support of the medical staff, completed a clinical rotation at Katahdin Valley Health Center (KVHC).

Her love of the outdoors and KVHC's patient mix provide a challenge and a hope to improve the health of underserved community members. Based at KVHC's Patten medical clinic, she commenced practicing medicine on a full-time basis in January 2007 as a National Health Service Corps scholar.

"Eliza's heart was to find a practice in a remote rural community where she could enjoy the varied opportunities the Katahdin Region offers outdoor enthusiasts and provide comprehensive primary and preventive care to patients of all ages. Her expertise, warmth and compassion are offered freely to patients, their families and to KVHC employees," said Holly Gartmayer, KVHC clinical practice director.

"She easily adapted to KVHC's systems and continuously seeks to improve efficiencies and productivity at our clinics. Eliza commenced a daily routine of planning and preparing for scheduled encounters, a routine that is now a model for KVHC's multi-site practice and inspires our goal to establish case management and nursing support," added Joe Sardina, M.D., KVHC medical director.

"Eliza is an inspirational role model. In early spring 2007, she began training to realize a personal goal to run a marathon to raise awareness and funds for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Funds are used for research to help stop leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's lymphoma and myeloma from taking more lives. The world's largest endurance sports training program, the Leukemia & Lymphoma

Society's Team In Training, Eliza embarked on a vigorous training regimen for the October 21, 2007 marathon held in San Francisco, completing the 26.2-mile course and raising more than \$3,000," said Sardina.

Together, the 15,000 runners in this marathon raised over \$8 million for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to help research and treatment development on both the national and state levels. Currie continues to fundraise to meet her personal contribution of \$4,000.

"The prevalence of cancer in Maine is a major health concern and continues to grow. The monies raised will help research and treatment development. This research will be most welcomed in our state," said Currie.

"Eliza's commitment to make a difference for her patients and her community is clearly demonstrated by her ability to set and attain her goals. Early in her tenure at KVHC, she demonstrated strong computer skills and quickly mastered KVHC's electronic medical record (EMR) system. She is a viable resource to KVHC providers and nursing staff, calculating shortcuts and unraveling difficult modalities with the EMR system," said Durward Humphrey, KVHC's chief executive officer.

"Eliza's experience in emergency medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, rural family medicine, hematology and oncology, and geriatric medicine has greatly enhanced KVHC's clinical offerings for our patients. She has become our EMR clinical champion. Her work ethic, sense of compassion and caring are extraordinary. She clearly deserves this award and we applaud Eliza and DEAPA for this distinction," said Humphrey.

The Downeast Association of Physician Assistants (DEAPA) was incorporated on April 1, 1977, as a nonprofit organization. DEAPA is representative of the physician assistants employed within the state of Maine. Its primary objective is to enhance quality medical care to the people of Maine through a process of continuing medical education to its membership, other health care workers and the general public. As a constituent organization of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, DEAPA meets all provides of the Academy's bylaws and policies and upholds the principles, purposes and philosophy for which the AAPA was founded.

Katahdin Valley Health Center (KVHC) is a provider of high quality, cost effective primary health, dental, substance abuse and mental health care to the people in the Greater Katahdin Region. A Federally Qualified Health Center, KVHC is a nonprofit business governed by a board of directors, comprised of area volunteers, funded by a federal grant under Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. KVHC employs 65 people at its facilities in Millinocket, Patten, Houlton and Island Falls.