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For Immediate Release

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**MDADVANTAGE HONORS NEW JERSEY'S HEALTHCARE LEADERS  
WITH PRESTIGIOUS "EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE" AWARDS**

***Sylvia Christakos, PhD, of UMDNJ–New Jersey Medical School  
and Resident of Mendham Among Honorees***

**Lawrenceville, NJ, May 26, 2011** – A group of outstanding New Jerseyans were lauded on May 4, 2011, when the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Foundation honored physicians and healthcare leaders. These coveted awards are among the highest honors given in New Jersey's medical community. MDAdvantage, a leading provider of medical professional liability insurance in New Jersey, sponsors the state's longest-running medical awards program to recognize New Jersey's healthcare efforts.

In addition to the awards bestowed upon this year's honorees, the Foundation's fundraising efforts enabled the donation of \$50,000, split among six New Jersey healthcare students, an increase from three scholarships awarded in 2010.

"We are thrilled that profits from the 2011 program, for the second consecutive year, will go directly to the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Scholarship Fund to help more New Jersey healthcare students pay for their education," said Patricia A. Costante, chairman and CEO of MDAdvantage. "The fund was created to encourage young people to study healthcare in New Jersey, and to help improve access to healthcare for New Jersey residents.

**Among those honored were Sylvia Christakos, PhD, Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ)–New Jersey Medical School and resident of Mendham who received the Outstanding Medical Educator Award.** The award is presented to medical educator who has made an outstanding contribution to a graduate or undergraduate medical education in New Jersey.

Other honorees included:

- **Edward J. Ill Physician's Award®:** *Mark Jay Zucker, MD, JD*, Director, Heart Failure Treatment and Transplant Program, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Clinical Professor of Medicine at UMDNJ– New Jersey Medical School.
- **Verice M. Mason Community Service Leader Award:** *Deborah M. Spitalnik, PhD*, Professor of Pediatrics and Executive Director, The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at UMDNJ- Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, on behalf of The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities.
- **Outstanding Medical Executive Award:** *Judith M. Persichilli, RN, BSN, MA*, President & CEO, Catholic Health East.



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- **Outstanding Medical Research Scientist Award for Clinical Research:** *Stephen F. Lowry, MD, MBA*, Professor, Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Senior Associate Dean for Education, UMDNJ – Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.
- **Outstanding Medical Research Scientist Award for Basic Biomedical Research:** *Masayori Inouye, PhD*, Distinguished Professor, UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The 2011 scholarship recipients are:

- Amanda Ganza, UMDNJ - New Jersey Medical School
- Farhad Modarai, UMDNJ - School of Osteopathic Medicine
- Cara Bergamo, UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- John Castronova– UMDNJ–New Jersey Dental School
- Heather Neidle– Seton Hall University–School of Health and Medical Sciences
- Shurika Perry– UMDNJ–School of Health Related Professions

Paul J. Hirsch, MD, Chairman of the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Foundation, stated, “These exceptional physicians, executives, educators and organizations, whose commitment to health, education and research, have forever changed and markedly improved the delivery of healthcare in New Jersey and around the world.”

This year, the Foundation introduced the Excellence in Medicine Scholarship Honor Roll, and proudly recognizes lead contributor and Excellence in Medicine Society member Kern, Augustine, Conroy & Schoppmann, PC for their support in promoting excellence in medicine.

The Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Foundation is now accepting nominations for the 2012 awards program. The deadline for nominations is August 19, 2011. For more information on the awards program and the nomination process, visit [www.EJIAwards.org](http://www.EJIAwards.org).

To learn more about this year’s honorees and their perspectives on healthcare, see the spring 2011 issue of *MDAdvisor: A Journal for the New Jersey Medical Community* ([www.MDAdvantageonline.com/MDAdvisor](http://www.MDAdvantageonline.com/MDAdvisor)).

**About MDAdvantage:** MDAdvantage Insurance Company of New Jersey is a leading provider of medical professional liability insurance in New Jersey. MDAdvantage is committed to supporting physician initiatives that increase patient safety and minimize the risks of liability, educating the New Jersey healthcare community and investing in the future of our state’s healthcare system ([www.MDAdvantageonline.com](http://www.MDAdvantageonline.com)). For more information about MDAdvantage, call 888-355-5551 or visit [www.MDAdvantageonline.com](http://www.MDAdvantageonline.com). For more information about *MDAdvisor*, including subscription and advertisement opportunities, go to [www.MDAdvantageonline.com/MDAdvisor](http://www.MDAdvantageonline.com/MDAdvisor).

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