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County Public Health Officer Eric Handler Named 2015 Physician of the Year

(Santa Ana, CA) – County of Orange Public Health Officer Eric Handler, MD, is the 2015 Physician of the Year, an honor bestowed by the Orange County Medical Association.

The award recognizes physicians for being hard-working, exhibiting extraordinary professional competence, serving as an educator and mentor for associates and nurses, being a strong motivator and displaying good rapport with patients. Handler was selected from among 40 nominees.

“Dr. Eric Handler is a great example of someone who went into the field wanting to help people and who has gone above and beyond to make a difference in the medical profession,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Todd Spitzer, Third District.

In addition to his duties as County health officer, a position he has held since August 2006, Handler is widely recognized for his leadership in efforts to end hunger and address homelessness in Orange County.

He was instrumental in the creation of the Illumination Foundation, the organization responsible for moving homeless families to permanent shelters. He also co-founded and remains a force WasteNot Orange County, an organization that facilitates the transfer of leftover and unused food from restaurants and grocers to those who are suffering from hunger and food insecurity.

In the past, Handler has served as the deputy secretary for Children’s Medical Services in the Florida Department of Health and Chief Medical Officer for the Florida Department of Children and Families. He also served as the chief medical officer for the Boston Regional Office for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Handler accepted the award at a May 2015 event, at which Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Chairman Todd Spitzer presented the keynote address.

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