

2011 Healthcare Innovation Awards

Lifetime Achievement Award

Friday, November 11, 2011

GOLD

John Tedeschi | Advocare/Continuum Health Alliance

Camden native and health-care entrepreneur Dr. John M. Tedeschi has spent more than four decades as a pediatrician, but he's never stopped trying to develop new and creative strategies for improving the health of children and the practice of medicine.

"I just clicked with pediatrics immediately during my education," said Tedeschi, when asked why he chose that specialty. "Once I got exposed to pediatrics that was it. But from day one I always liked the idea of thinking outside the box and figuring out what we can do to make things better."

He has spearheaded statewide immunization campaigns in New Jersey for children in need and served as medical director or board member of many community organizations, including the Save the Children Foundation and the Camden County Task Force for Children. Tedeschi has served on the N.J. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' executive council and has been a member of the N.J. Physicians Board of Trustees since 2007.

In October 2009, Virtua honored Tedeschi and his impact on pediatric medicine by establishing the John M. Tedeschi Institute, a \$25 million initiative that provides children with acute care, pediatric emergency care, ambulatory care, wellness programs, and outpatient community programs while also conducting research and philanthropic activities.

He is a member of the Cooper Health System's board of directors and a board member of the Southern New Jersey Cooperative, an organization he founded in 1978 to improve maternal and neonatal health care statewide.

When health maintenance organizations swept into the region in the 1980s, he became one of the first medical directors at U.S. Healthcare — working directly with the Blue Bell company's founder Leonard Abramson during the early days of the managed-care company.

Tedeschi never gave up practicing medicine. When his partner had to retire for health reasons, Tedeschi returned to being a full-time pediatrician in Collingswood.

He discovered upon his return that many of his physician colleagues were afflicted with low morale. "Doctors were unhappy about the business side of medicine," he said.

That led him to start two companies in 1998: Advocare, which began as a small group of affiliated pediatricians and has since grown to one of the region's largest multi-specialty practice groups with more than 60 practices and 85 offices serving more than 500,000 patients, and Continuum Health Alliance, a practice management company that provides 300 different services to doctors encompassing all aspects of managing a practice so doctors can focus on patient care.

The two companies have grown to the point that Tedeschi had to give up his practice about three years ago to devote all his time to his CEO responsibilities. — John George

