

CODAC's Linda Hurley honored with two national awards

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CRANSTON – CODAC Behavioral Health Care President and CEO Linda Hurley will be honored this spring with two national awards for her decades of work ensuring access to substance use disorder treatment.

In April, Hurley will be presented with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Lifetime Achievement Award during the organization's annual conference, NatCon24. Later, in May, Hurley will also receive the Nyswander-Dole "Marie" Award from the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence.

"I'm so honored to be the recipient, not just for me but for the patients we serve and the staff who serve them," she told The Call & Times. "This award recognizes the decreasing stigma of those people who come to us for care and those of us who provide that care."

Hurley has over 30 years of experience in the field of mental health and substance use treatment, and under her leadership at CODAC, Rhode Island has



Linda Hurley

become a leader in treating opioid use disorder, especially through the organization's widely replicated model for medication-assisted treatment in carceral settings and the nation's first mobile methadone unit to launch under new federal regulations. Being a small state makes it easier for a nonprofit like CODAC to collaborate effectively with government entities like the Department of Corrections and the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, she said.

"We're a good pilot state, a good test state because of our small size," Hurley said. She also

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credited the support of Gov. Daniel McKee and former Gov. Gina Raimondo, and partnership with Brown University in data management and evaluation.

They key to CODAC's success, Hurley said, is a commitment to keeping the people seeking help at the center of the nonprofit's mission and strategic planning, something Hurley said was ingrained by her own mentors and predecessors.

"When we create a vision, the vision is always, always focused on current community need," she said. "If you keep that as your guardrail for your planning, you can't be wrong. We are deeply in tune to the communities we serve."

With such a long career to reflect on, Hurley said it was difficult to pinpoint her proudest accomplishment, but she highlighted CODAC's Tobacco Cessation Services of Rhode Island program for treating nicotine addiction, which has personal significance to her, and adding a specific type of acupuncture

approved for opioid use disorder treatment to the organization's wellness offerings.

All of the programs and initiatives Hurley has overseen are about helping patients not just survive the disease but thrive in recovery, she said.

"I can't pick one over the other because it's truly exciting to me," she said. "Health is one thing and comprehensive wellness is another."

At the National Council conference, Hurley will be one of five honorees and one of two lifetime achievement recipients. She said that award is particularly exciting because the National Council brings together more fields than just substance use treatment, so recognition of Hurley and CODAC indicates a receding stigma of her field.

"Hurley is a trailblazer and a leader," National Council CEO and President Chuck Ingoglia said in a statement. "People in Rhode Island are better off because of her thoughtful leadership. The changes she has introduced have improved substance use treatment and care, and so many people benefited as

a result. She is truly a lifesaver."

The "Marie" Award is the highest accolade the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence can bestow on someone in the field of opioid use disorder treatment. It is named for Dr. Vincent Dole and Dr. Marie Nyswander, who pioneered medication-assisted addiction treatment and were the first to receive the award in 1983.

"Hurley is one of the most experienced and talented program administrators in the country," said Mark Parrino, president of AATOD, in a statement. "She has enhanced the quality of patient care in the CODAC facilities and represents an excellent example of how treatment programs respond to the needs that our patients present."

Hurley said both awards are coming at an opportune time to give CODAC traction as it goes after grants for new initiatives. CODAC received a \$1.2 million earmark in the federal spending bill passed last month for renovations at its new center on Royal Lit-

tle Drive in Providence. The new location will be the first "fully integrated center," Hurley said, offering behavioral health care, primary care, medically assisted treatment for substance use, dental care, peer recovery, a full on-site pharmacy and potentially a food pantry and other services.

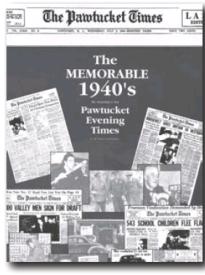
Following the two conferences in April and May, Hurley and some CODAC staff will also be visiting Portugal to present on CODAC's mobile methadone unit, which is deployed in Woonsocket. Hurley said while she's there, she will also be checking out some of Portugal's harm reduction centers, also known as safe injection sites, which offer people with opioid use disorders treatment services as well as a safe place to use. Hurley is also looking at different ways of providing treatment for adolescents and families, two groups that often struggle to access treatment at centers that are only open during normal business hours.

"We never stop. I don't stop. Our colleagues, our staff are very for-

ward-thinking as well, they want to do the right so we're always looking at what happens in other places," Hurley said. "People care and

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