

**BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD**

  
2014
**Special Award****Dr. John McDonald, PrimaCare Community Family Health Team****Recognizing the bright light behind the Bright Lights Awards**

The Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario has given a special Bright Lights Award to Dr. John McDonald, of PrimaCare Community Family Health Team in Paris. The Association was celebrating Dr. McDonald, one of its founding members, at its annual conference in Toronto.

The Association, known as AFHTO, is dedicated to promoting high quality, interprofessional primary care for Ontarians. AFHTO members work in interprofessional teams, where different mixes of professionals — including nurses, physicians, social workers, dietitians and pharmacists, among others — work together and with patients, families and the broader community.

There are different types of teams — family health teams are the largest group, but other types of primary care organizations can also join AFHTO. What brings them together is their commitment to delivering comprehensive primary care, through innovative treatment and best practices, all based on solid research and the use of local data to shape local care.

A decade ago, when family health teams were just being launched, and efforts at interprofessional primary care were mostly taking baby steps, Dr. McDonald understood the importance of mutual support for the new enterprises. AFHTO was to offer a formalized network and shared voice to the new primary care teams around the province.

But once AFHTO was up and running, Dr. McDonald looked for a way to encourage innovation and the spread of ideas among practices: he proposed creating awards to recognize the great ideas that were being generated and tried in primary care teams around the province. He knew awards can provide a crucial ingredient every organization — and every individual — need to keep succeeding: pride in jobs well done. The first Bright Lights awards were handed out in 2012.

Bright Lights Awards celebrate leadership and recognize innovators whose ideas improve patients' experiences and health outcomes, and reduce overall costs to the health care system. The nominated projects are top examples of bright ideas being generated across the province to improve and sustain the excellent primary health care that AFHTO members provide for over 3 million Ontarians.

The Bright Lights awards, however, are just one mark of the success of Dr. McDonald. Since he graduated from UWO in 1975 and opened his family practice in Paris, Ontario, he has been involved in advocacy at all levels of the health system, particularly around primary care renewal. He worked in Ontario's first Primary Care Network, which has evolved to the PrimaCare Community FHT.

Although he's reached his term limit as a board member for AFHTO, we know he'll be taking his bright light on to other important work for the patients and health system of Ontario.