



P.O. BOX 2039 • TYLER, TEXAS 75710

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**Contact: Terrence Ates
Public Information Officer
(903) 343 - 5451**

Northeast Texas Public Health District Announces 2019 W.T. “Doc” Ballard Award Recipient

April 26, 2019 – Tyler, Texas

The Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health) is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2019 W. T. “Doc” Ballard Award for Excellence in Public Health, our highest accolade for outstanding service contributing significantly to the enhancement of public health.

“Doc” Ballard, a registered professional engineer for the Texas Department of Health and mentor to NET Health, was a leader in protecting the health of the public. His expertise and administrative skills ensured the environmental controls crucial to the quality and safety of public drinking water and public food service, proper disposal of waste, and the monitoring of radiation.

For the 2019 W. T. “Doc” Ballard Award, the Northeast Texas Public Health District recognizes Dr. Valerie Smith, who has served the children of East Texas for the past 12 years as a pediatrician at the St. Paul Children’s Medical Clinic. Dr. Valerie Smith received her medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and completed her pediatric residency at Arkansas Children’s Hospital, where she developed an interest in child health advocacy and established a community education program for all-terrain vehicle safety.

Through her work on the Fit City Tyler Steering Committee, Dr. Smith brought the Fit City 5-2-1-0 Program to TylerISD and WhitehouseISD, educating teachers, students, and parents about healthy habits that promote lifelong health. As co-chair of the Texas Pediatric Society Committee on Nutrition and Health, Dr. Smith led the “Be Our Voice” childhood obesity advocacy training program, implementing evidence-based policies to improve children’s health across East Texas.

Her experience working with children with chronic health problems, families struggling with poverty, and children in foster care motivated her to dedicate her time and efforts to reducing obesity and food insecurity, and improving health care for children in foster care. Dr. Smith has made an indelible mark, not only as a caring pediatrician, but also for her efforts to eradicate the conditions that create disease, making wellness available to each child, no matter where they live.

Most recently, Dr. Smith has focused on the issue of food insecurity and educating the community on its connections with health. In 2018, she founded the Smith County Food Security Council, a local multi-sector coalition dedicated to reducing hunger and improving health in our communities through increased screenings and interventions for food insecurity.

NET Health is thankful for the support from the East Texas chapter of the Texas Environmental Health Association (TEHA) for their contributions toward the annual recognition of the Doc Ballard Award.

Judges for the selection of the annual “Doc” Ballard Award include two members of the Northeast Texas Public Health District’s Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer of the Health District, one person each from the Texas Department of State Health Services Region 4/5 North and from the Smith County Extension Office.

About the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health)

NET Health serves a vital function through our Departments of Immunizations, Tuberculosis Control, Laboratory Services, Vital Statistics, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Disease Surveillance, Environmental Health, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) & Community Outreach.

The mission of NET Health is to promote health, prevent illness and protect our community.

Visit us at MyNETHealth.org. [“Like” us on Facebook](#) and [“Follow” us on Instagram](#).

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Pictured from left to right are Dr. Li-Yu Mitchell (Chairperson of the NET Health Board of Directors), Dr. Valerie Smith (recipient of the 2019 “Doc” Ballard Award), and George Roberts (Chief Executive Officer of NET Health).



2019 “Doc” Ballard Recipient, Dr. Valerie Smith, pictured with members of the Ballard Family. The children of Doc Ballard are Brian (2nd from left), Bruce (far right), and Barbara (3rd from right).



2019 “Doc” Ballard Recipient, Dr. Valerie Smith, pictured with Dr. Danny Price and Deirdre Leung, two of her fellow providers at the St. Paul Children’s Medical Clinic: