

Spencer is University of Michigan Health System social worker of the year

Beth Spencer, MSW, LMSW, received the seventh annual Beverly Jean Howard Award for Excellence in Social Work. The award recognizes excellence in social work practice and is given in the name of a beloved Health System colleague who died in September of 2002.



Spencer is director of the U-M Geriatrics Center's Silver Club Program, a highly acclaimed social and enrichment program for people with memory loss. She also oversees Coffeehouse and Memory Keepers, related programs for people with earlier stages of memory loss. Spencer was honored for her expertise in the field of dementia care and her administration of the Silver Club Programs by providing ongoing innovation, modeling and supervision.

"Knowing the quality of my social work peers at UMHS, I am particularly honored by this award," says Spencer. "Working with my social work colleagues at the Geriatrics Center has been a particular joy; their dedication, collegiality, and skill is an ongoing inspiration to me. Every day social workers in the health system handle difficult, sometimes life and death issues with grace and integrity; I am continually amazed at the work we all do!"

The Beverly Jean Howard Award for Excellence in Social Work seeks the following qualifications:

- professional performance at a consistently excellent level
- significant contributions to the field of social work
- excellence in service toward internal and external customers
- promote social work practice within and outside the hospital
- effective and innovative social work practice

Other nominees include: Janet Allen, Lorrie Carbone, Susan Duarte-Digon, Mariko Foulk, Mary Gass, JoAnn Heap, Chris Henrickson, Wendy Jaffe, Maren Jensen, Erin Khang, Maria Letzmann, Claudia Schenk, Barb Shaltis, and Claire Weiner.