peak of health care and it’s easy to tick off the many sweeping challenges facing the medical community, from rising health care costs to an aging population. Nonetheless there are also many big opportunities for doers with ambitious ideas.

The brand new Heritage Healthcare Innovation Awards are for the first time honoring 25 leaders who are making a measurable contribution to improve access to affordable health care in the communities they serve in the New York metropolitan area, while upgrading the quality of care. These leading thinkers are transforming the organizations that provide care to New Yorkers every day, expanding primary care options in the city, finding new ways to meet the needs of underserved populations, supporting health care startups, creating new apps to streamline care and doing much more.

Heritage Provider Network (HPN), one of the nation’s leading physician-led managed care organizations, created the awards program, which honored the winners and finalists at an event in Manhattan on May 16.

“Honoring innovators who have improved the quality, access and cost of healthcare for New Yorkers is the goal of the Heritage Healthcare Innovation Awards,” said Dr. Richard Merkin, President and CEO of HPN. “We will honor and support the clinicians, researchers, administrators and organizations that pioneer the newest models of diagnosis, treatment and care coordination. We believe honoring these leaders will bring needed recognition to their advances and ultimately help improve the lives of millions of New Yorkers.”

A diverse panel of independent expert health care judges guided the selection process. Awards were presented in five categories:

• **Innovation in Healthcare Delivery:** recognizing innovators in the development of new modes of diagnosis, treatment, and care

• **Technology Innovator:** highlighting an individual or institution that uses technology to create scalable improvements in health care delivery and patient outcomes

• **Research Investigator in Translational Medicine:** honoring an individual or team that has achieved significant quantitative results by accelerating the transition of novel and innovative diagnostic tools and treatments to patients

• **Individual Healthcare Leadership:** recognizing a leader in the New York area who has had a significant impact in his or her field

• **Organizational Leadership:** honoring an organization that has fundamentally changed how health care is delivered
Winner:
Louise Cohen, MPH
CEO of Primary Care Development Corporation

When Louise Cohen took the helm of the Primary Care Development Corporation in 2015, she brought deep experience to the nonprofit’s mission of addressing the lack of primary care services in New York City’s low-income communities. She had been the Vice President for Public Health Programs at Public Health Solutions, a national public health institute, and previously served as agency chief of staff and deputy commissioner for health care access and improvement at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Cohen, a member of the Primary Care Development Corporation’s board since 2011, replaced founding CEO Ronda Kotelchuck, who retired.

The Primary Care Development Corporation is unusual in that it is a community development financial institution (CDFI) that focuses on financing primary care, said Cohen. Many CDFIs concentrate on projects involved with education or housing. “We provide a safety net to primary care providers, many of whom could not get a standard bank loan,” said Cohen.

Under Cohen’s leadership, the nonprofit has also supported primary care providers as they adapt to new delivery and payment models transforming the health care industry. “We’ve done a great deal of work to support practices directly,” said Cohen.

The organization also does advocacy work and convenes stakeholder meetings to discuss key issues. “We have always worked in partnership with organizations in New York City, New York State and around the country to make sure we can be effective in our work,” said Cohen.

Heritage Healthcare Organizational Leadership Award

Ruth Browne
CEO of Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health

Concerned about the health disparities among people of color, tennis star Arthur Ashe created the Arthur Ashe Institute of Urban Health in 1992. CEO Ruth Browne, who joined the nonprofit 23 years ago, has continued his legacy through a comprehensive variety of programs. In one popular one, “Heart of a Woman,” the institute uses a culturally tailored heart-health curriculum in barber shops and beauty salons. “Our work is really focused on community health empowerment,” said Browne. “And when I say that I mean giving people tools and resources and educating them so they can be more proactive about their own health, the health of their families and ultimately their community.”

Neil Calman, M.D.
President and CEO of The Institute of Family Health and Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Since founding the Institute for Family Health in 1983, Neil Calman has grown it into one of the largest community health centers in New York State, with headquarters in New York City and New Paltz. Operating in 29 locations and with 1,200 employees, the nonprofit network operates 365 days a year, with some centers open until 10 p.m. “We’ll take care of anyone who walks through our door, with a health problem, a mental health problem, a dental problem,” said Calman. To prepare physicians to work with medically underserved patients, the program operates three residency training programs in family medicine.

Richard Park, M.D.
CEO of CityMD

Established in 2010, urgent-care company CityMD has grown from a single practice on the Upper East Side to 53 locations in New York City. One key commitment has been providing care to underserved neighborhoods. The Heal by CityMD program, piloted in 2014 in Jackson Heights, Queens, brought an urgent care center to the community, one of the most underserved ones in the U.S. Operating without Medicaid managed-care contracts, CityMD worked with community partners and charity care to treat local patients. The company’s Aftercare program provides patients with access to case managers who help them navigate the system. “We’re proud to say we have delivered personalized, connected health care with kindness to over 2 million people,” said CEO Richard Park, M.D.

Weill Cornell Community Clinic

The Weill Cornell Community Clinic, where 212 medical students volunteer to provide care to 125 low- and moderate-income New Yorkers each year, recently marked its 10-year anniversary. The free clinic in Manhattan provides comprehensive primary care, as well as women’s health and mental health services. Students at the clinic have also raised funds to defray the cost of pharmaceuticals for patients, so it can provide a $45 per month reimbursement to patients for them. “One of the great things about the clinic is the model serves to help patients who don’t have insurance,” said Lisa Noble, co-executive director. “It helps students develop as independent physicians.”
Heritage Research Investigator in Translational Medicine Award

Winner:
Hollis Potter, M.D.
Department Chairman, Hospital for Special Surgery and Radiology

Many physicians find it difficult to resolve the pain and discomfort some patients suffer after joint replacement. The Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) has done years of research, some funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), into how best to use an MRI scan for these patients, to provide their physicians with information conventional diagnostic imaging doesn’t offer.

As leader of the hospital’s team of 250 physicians and researchers, Hollis Potter, M.D., chairman of the Department of Radiology and Imaging at the Hospital for Special Surgery, collaborates with colleagues in many specialties to optimize the use of magnetic resonance imaging.

“The success of the Department of Radiology and Imaging at the Hospital for Special Surgery is based on translating research innovation into clinical application,” said Potter. “Our research questions are guided by the specific needs of our patients and concerns of our clinical colleagues.”

Potter, a veteran of HSS, was appointed chairman of its Department of Radiology in 2013. The Department has done a decade of work to establish the safety and effectiveness of imaging patients with orthopedic hardware such as joint replacement using MRI.

The research at HSS has helped to develop a new means by which the MRI acquires the images around the implants, she said. This new method has been used by medical professionals to address issues such as adverse tissue reactions around orthopedic implants.

The NIH funding has allowed HSS to advance its research, which has branched out into assessment of all forms of pain or reduced patient function after a joint replacement. “The development of these translational research techniques has been met with marked enthusiasm by our orthopedic colleagues,” said Potter, who noted that the department has now expanded to additional magnetic resonance units, both at the main campus and HSS’ satellite facilities.

David Levy, M.D.
CEO of AposTherapy

Many patients with chronic hip, back and knee pain resign themselves to living with constant discomfort—even after getting physical therapy. AposTherapy aims to change that. It offers special sneaker-like medical devices that, if worn for about an hour a day, have been shown to shift the patient’s gait to reduce pressure on the joints.

Insurer Healthfirst has been covering the treatment for patients at Montefiore Medical Center and Elmhurst Hospital. Under the leadership of CEO David Levy, M.D., AposTherapy’s devices are now available through physical-therapy practices at affiliated institutions in Greater New York City.

Nina Tandon
CEO of Epibone

More than 900,000 patients undergo bone-related surgeries each year. Bone reconstruction startup Epibone, incorporated in 2013, is dedicated to reducing some of the risks that come with using implants from titanium and other materials by using proprietary technology to cultivate bone grafts grown from patients’ own stem cells.

Having grown facial bones for pigs, the Manhattan biotechnology company is planning to embark on human trials in coming years, drawing on funding from investors such as PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel.

Fulbright scholar and TED fellow Nina Tandon, the company’s co-founder, is focusing efforts on helping patients suffering from congenital facial defects or trauma to the bones of the head and face. “For any technology that is a good prototype in the lab, it is important for us to explore using science to see how that technology might be able to help people,” said Tandon.

The New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS)

Physicians, researchers, scientists and public health experts don’t always have opportunities to discuss recent breakthroughs and challenges in translating basic science into clinical applications with each other. To promote better communication among them, the NYAS and The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation—which fosters innovation in the education and training of health care professionals—created the Translational Medicine Initiative, a three-year partnership. The initiative’s Translational Medicine Discussion Group offers a lively intellectual forum. “The Academy brings together experts from every science- and technology-related field and gives them opportunities to work together,” said Ellis Rubinstein, president and CEO, The New York Academy of Sciences.

Watson Oncology (IBM/Memorial Sloan Kettering)

As cancer care moves toward more individualized treatments, many physicians want to tap into medical advances more quickly. To enable that, Memorial Sloan Kettering and IBM have partnered to “train” IBM’s Watson computer—a cognitive-computing platform—to interpret cancer patients’ clinical data and uncover evidence-based treatments that fit their unique makeup.

“Our hope is to share our knowledge and wisdom to help physicians around the world understand the subtleties of each person’s illness and their cancers to select the best choice among an expanding number of options for care,” said medical oncologist Mark Kris.
We were still working out the kinks. Now we see that volume in a matter of weeks.”

Home program, he notes, “it took us about eight months to see the first 50 patients. of these services delivered late at night, “ said Sui. He is optimistic. In the Hospital-at-Home program, he notes, “it took us about eight months to see the first 50 patients. We were still working out the kinks. Now we see that volume in a matter of weeks.”

Albert Siu, M.D.

Caring for elderly patients who need acute or sub-acute care in a hospital setting can be very costly. At Mt. Sinai, Albert Siu, M.D., chairman of the department of geriatrics and palliative medicine, has an initiative to bring some of that care into the home.

Under a three-year, $9.6 million federal grant, Medicaid and Medicare patients who show up at Mt. Sinai’s emergency room with certain conditions—such as diabetes, urinary tract infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure—are given the option to be treated with acute care as inpatients or at home.

The initiative, known as Hospital-at-Home, enrolled its first patients in 2014.

So far, the program has taken care of 200 patients, all in Manhattan, with many positive results, according to Siu. “We have shown that we can deliver the services safely and successfully, that we can shorten what would otherwise be their length of stay, and that we have improved patient-satisfaction metrics relative to similar patients who would otherwise be in the hospital,” Siu said. “We’ve reduced complications and reduced the 30-day readmission rate to the hospital.” Fewer than 5% had to come into the hospital for escalation of care. Meanwhile, the cost per patient dipped by 15% on average.

Siu, who is the immediate past chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, has also developed the Mobile Acute Care for the Elderly (MACE) specialized unit at the hospital, which treats high-risk geriatric patients. It is made up of a geriatrician-hospitalist, a fellow, a nurse coordinator and a social worker, who help coordinate care with patients and their families. The program is designed to help patients avoid hazards of hospitalization, such as losing muscle strength because of bed-bound.

Next on his agenda is rolling some of the hospital’s services for the elderly outside of a nine-to-five schedule, a process that is slowly beginning. “It’s hard to get some of these services delivered late at night,” said Sui. He is optimistic. In the Hospital-at-Home program, he notes, “it took us about eight months to see the first 50 patients. We were still working out the kinks. Now we see that volume in a matter of weeks.”

Winners

Albert Siu, M.D.
the Ellen and Howard C. Katz Chairman’s Chair of the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

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The Manhattan-based company has rolled out its technology at optical stores, with a couple in Queens using it now, Zhou said. Exams cost $40 out of pocket. “The affordability and convenience factor benefit a lot of customers,” he said. “You don’t need to have insurance.”

What happens if someone has a serious eye problem, like glaucoma or cataracts? “The technology will reject you and ask you to see the doctor face to face,” said Zhou.

Today the SVOne is used around the globe, everywhere from developing countries to New York City, where the company has found through on-site exams at schools that many underperforming students are suffering from vision problems. Even many corporate workers are walking around without needed glasses, he said. In testing 2,000 workers at 50 companies, about 30% have uncorrected vision problems, Smart Vision found. “If you don’t have good vision, you don’t know what good vision is,” said Zhou.
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optimum access to care and providing the best overall customer experience, ” he said.

“The goal is to be a premier organization delivering the best quality, providing

and controlled mannequins, in standardized patient rooms. In 2012, the institute

received accreditation from the Society of Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) for

excellence in core standards, teaching and education, and assessment and

systems integration.

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priorities is easy,” said Dowling. “It’s all about implementation and operations to

make it happen.”

winner:

Michael Dowling
President and CEO of
Northwell Health

Since becoming president and
CEO of Northwell Health in 2002,
Michael Dowling has set ambitious
goals for New York State’s largest
integrated health care system.
Known as the North Shore-LIJ
Health System until it rebranded in
2015, the Northwell Health system
has grown to include 21 hospitals,

and 61,000 employees.

Before taking his role, Dowling served as New York State’s Director of Health,
Education and Human Services and deputy secretary to the governor. At
Northwell, creating a strong talent bench has been one of his top priorities. Under
his leadership, the Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine was founded within
Northwell Health in 2008 and enrolled its first class of students in 2011. Another
new school, The Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Graduate Nursing and
Physician Assistant Studies, enrolled its first class in September 2015.

Dowling has also prioritized Northwell’s Center for Learning and Innovation,
which provides continuing education to Northwell’s team, and the Patient
Safety Institute, where students at the North Shore-LIJ School of
Medicine can simulate situations such as
performing physical exams
and delivering babies in
state-of-the-art human-
simulation laboratories
with digitally enhanced

Left to right: Jill Kaplan, VP/Publisher of Crain’s New York
Mark Wagar, President of Heritage Medical Systems
and Dr. Richard Merkin, CEO of Heritage Provider Network
2016 Heritage Healthcare Innovation Awards

The winners and finalists of the inaugural Heritage Healthcare Awards celebrated and networked at a special luncheon on May 16 at the Apella, an event space at the Alexandria Center overlooking the East River.

For more photos and award information, go to crainsnewyork.com/heritagefinalists