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**Ontario Health Coalition Announces Our Highest Awards for 2021:
This year's recipients have made extraordinary contributions to vaccine education,
stopping for-profit long-term care, public health care activism and advocacy for long-term
care residents and their families**

Toronto – They contributed in unique ways, but each demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the public interest, the Ontario Health Coalition reported as it announced the winners of its highest awards. The awards celebrate the contributions of Ontarians who have made a remarkable contribution in public health care.

“This year we have faced enormous challenges in public health care. Each of our award winners have given extraordinarily of their time and effort in the public interest. They are beacons of hope. It is our honour to have worked with them and supported their efforts,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition.

The Ethel Meade Award awarded to Dr. Tara Moriarty

Ethel Meade was a long-standing advocate on health care issues who founded and led an array of health care organizations. She was the vice-chair of CareWatch, a founder and chair of the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, a founder and co-chair of the Ontario Health Coalition, a member of the Seniors' Secretariat and the Ontario Association of Social Workers Committee on Issues of Aging, among many others. Her knowledge of the health system was encyclopaedic and she was consulted by governments at the municipal and provincial level, as well as by professional and community organizations, regarding the development of public policy in her areas of particular passion, including home and community care.

The Ethel Meade Award was created upon Ethel's retirement from the Ontario Health Coalition Board of Directors and is given to the person whose research and/or policy work has made a crucial contribution to the public health care system and the fight to protect it.

Dr. Tara Moriarty inspired and led hundreds of health care experts and professionals to provide online daily vaccine information sessions to thousands of people, on a volunteer basis, and to provide a safe space for people to ask questions and receive information about vaccines, grounded in evidence. Her dedication, compassion and deep commitment to public education is extraordinary. Dr. Moriarty has also researched sub-populations who have relatively lower rates of vaccination and has worked tirelessly to reach them with accurate vaccine information and to provide them with an opportunity to ask questions and get fulsome answers. Her work to reduce vaccine hesitancy and counter medical misinformation is inspiring. We are proud to name her as the recipient of the Ethel Meade Award for excellence in research that has made a crucial contribution to public health care.

The Daniel Benedict Award awarded to Ed Cashman, Mary Catherine McCarthy, Nancy Parker and Kevin Skerrett

Daniel Benedict was awarded the Order of Canada in 1998 for his many contributions for social justice, public health care, justice for seniors, workers' rights and education, and as a tireless advocate in the cause of international solidarity and global equity. He served as co-chair of the Ontario Health Coalition and was a founding member. Dan made inspiring contributions to workers' education in Latin America and in Canada, and he is remembered around the globe for his contribution to social justice in North America, Latin America and Europe.

The Daniel Benedict Award is given annually to the person or persons who - working with one of the local health coalitions – best embodies Dan Benedict’s spirit of extraordinary community activism and commitment to the protection and extension of Public Medicare.

Ed Cashman and Mary Catherine McCarthy, as the co-chairs of the Ottawa Health Coalition, have been instrumental in local organizing and have played an integral role in cross-province initiatives throughout the year. They have worked tirelessly to advocate for public health care and to remove profit from long-term care. They have shown extraordinary leadership in the Ontario Health Coalition and have been working to mobilize and support other local coalitions. Nancy Parker and Kevin Skerrett have worked extensively on the campaign to make public the for-profit long-term care chain Revera. They inspired and helped to lead a national movement to call on the federal Public Service Pension Investment Board to turn Revera over to public ownership and end for-profit long-term care. They have contributed significantly to the body of research and evidence regarding Revera’s horrific record of care during the pandemic. We are humbled by their voluntary commitment and dedication to protecting and improving public health care in their communities and in our country.

The Orville Thacker Award awarded to Sandra Caleta and Jane Meadus

Orville was deeply committed to focussing attention on social issues affecting Canadian families, and in particular, for seniors. He was a member of Ontario Health Coalition and a founder and co-chair of the Kitchener Waterloo Regional Health Coalition. He was a veteran, active in the legion, a tireless political campaigner and a stalwart advocate for social justice.

The Orville Thacker Award recognizes exceptional commitment and contribution to improving quality public health care for the elderly in Ontario. It is awarded to a person or organization whose voluntary contribution supports the fundamental principles in the Canada Health Act - principles of fairness, equity and compassion - that underlie Public Medicare in Canada.

Sandra Caleta's work coordinating the Advocates for LTC Reform, a group that has grown to more than 4,000 LTC families and workers, has been vital in fighting for the rights of elders in long-term care while also helping to organize long-term care family members for improvements in long-term care. She has spent countless hours answering the questions from families and workers, correcting misinformation, advocating, supporting, and liaising families with media.

Jane Meadus is a lawyer and the institutional advocate at the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, a legal clinic for low-income seniors. For more than two decades, Jane has advocated for thousands of long-term care residents and families. In the pandemic she has been a rock; answering questions about ever-changing legislation, regulations and policy; taking referrals of families in crisis; speaking with media; lending her expertise in meetings and on committees; working tirelessly to analyse policy changes. Extraordinarily generous with her time and expertise, never seeking the spotlight, Jane is an inspiration. She has helped enormously both on an individual and systemic level.

It is our privilege to know and to work with Sandra and Jane and we are honoured to award them with the Orville Thacker Award for their exceptional contribution to improving quality public health care for the elderly in Ontario.