



## **Donna Thompson, R.N., M.S.**

Chief Executive Officer

When Donna Thompson joined Access Community Health Network (ACCESS) as Chief Operating Officer in 1995, she was very familiar with the difficulties patients faced due to their lack of access to primary and preventive care. For more than 30 years, Donna has been on the front lines of patient care delivery. Now CEO of ACCESS, a post she has held since 2004, Donna demonstrates daily how a focused commitment to high quality community health care can save lives, revitalize communities, and preserve the possibility of a healthy life for hundreds of thousands of patients across the Chicagoland area.

### **Spearheading growth and quality at ACCESS**

Through its mission, ACCESS provides high quality, comprehensive community-based health care in the area's most underserved communities. In her 14 years as CEO, Donna has led ACCESS to become one of the largest federally-qualified health center (FQHC) organizations in the country. ACCESS serves more than 183,000 patients each year in 36 health center locations across the greater Chicago area, including suburban Cook and DuPage counties. In FY'18, ACCESS is projected to provide its patients with more than 585,000 medical visits.

Under Donna's leadership, ACCESS has developed a model of health care that helps patients navigate the gap between community-based care and other critical resources from vital hospital services to community support services. Five ACCESS centers are co-located with other organizations, such as the Illinois Eye Institute, the Anixter Center, the Gary Comer Youth Center and the DuPage County Health Department, to better address patient concerns comprehensively. ACCESS has been continuously accredited by the Joint Commission since 2000, and received National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Level 3 designation for each of its eligible health centers since 2015.

Strongly believing in a care model that expands 'beyond the walls' of the health center, Donna has successfully led ACCESS through the implementation of its Epic electronic health record and practice management system. Through this investment, more than 100,000 patients can actively engage with their provider and manage their care needs through the use of an online patient

portal accessible by a custom app available on smartphones, tablets and computers, guaranteeing access to their care team anytime and anywhere.

Keeping the focus on providing solutions to health inequities, ACCESS has invested in long-term partnerships for teaching and research. ACCESS' broad partnerships enable community-based research to address health disparities and to share those best practices within the community. In 2015, ACCESS opened its NIH-funded ACCESS Center for Discovery and Learning in Chicago's Englewood community alongside a community health center and an integrative services center.

## **Championing early cancer detection**

As a community organizer concerned with effecting change beyond the health center walls, Donna organized the Stand Against Cancer program in 2002, bringing together more than 1,400 women, elected officials and faith leaders representing every religious denomination, race, ethnicity and age group to advocate for increased funding for breast and cervical cancer screenings. As a result of this advocacy effort, the State of Illinois had allocated nearly \$4 million annually to the Stand Against Cancer program, to reach women in faith communities to promote early detection, and offer screenings and follow-up care for those who are underinsured and uninsured. The State of Illinois terminated the program in 2015 because of its own budget crisis. ACCESS continues to advocate for reinstating the program.

On Mother's Day in 2007, Donna launched Pin-A-Sister™/Examine Comadre™, bringing together members of predominantly African-American and Hispanic congregations to recognize breast cancer survivors and provide education around the importance of breast health and regular preventive screenings. To date, this faith-based breast cancer awareness campaign has reached more than one million people in churches, community organizations and correctional centers during its signature events surrounding Mother's Day, and has touched more than four million individuals through media outreach efforts nationally and internationally.

## **Other appointments and acknowledgements**

Donna received her BSN from DePaul University in 1986, as well as her Master of Science, Nursing Administration in 1989. Donna was named a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellow in 2003. She received the 2007 Chicago Athena Award for her leadership in developing community health and was recognized as one of Chicago United's 2007 Business Leaders of Color. She is also a co-founder of the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force. In 2008, Donna received the Chicago National Organization for Women's Outstanding Community Leader Award. In 2009, N'Digo magazine named her one of Chicago's most influential women., Donna is also a 2010 graduate of the Kellogg School of Management's CEO Perspectives program. Donna is also on the Board of Directors of Access DuPage. She received the National Medical Fellowship Leadership in Healthcare Award in 2015. She is a Trustee of DePaul University.