



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Thomas R. Ortiz, MD, FAAFP, DABFP, Named Family Physician of the Year**

**Trenton, NJ** – The New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians (NJAFP) recently recognized Thomas R. Ortiz, MD, FAAFP, DABFP, founder and medical director of Forest Hill Family Health Associates, PA, as the 2018 New Jersey Family Physician of the Year at its Annual Scientific Assembly in Atlantic City.

Each year, this award is presented to one outstanding physician in the state who best exemplifies the tradition of the family physician by providing the community with compassionate, comprehensive and caring medical service on a continuing basis. The recipient is directly and effectively involved in community affairs and activities that enhance the quality of life within their community, emulating the family physician as a healer and human being. In addition, the Family Physician of the Year is a role model for professionalism in the service and art of medicine to colleagues, other health professionals, the community and especially to young physicians in training and to medical students. Dr. Ortiz meets all of these criteria and more.

A board-certified family physician and public health advocate, Dr. Ortiz has practiced medicine and advocated for value-based payment reform and universal primary care access for the poor and most vulnerable populations for more than 30 years.

“As an advocate, Dr. Ortiz has helped improve access for families in need of health care by helping them to understand the need for primary care and, more importantly, to establish a ‘medical home,’” said Mary Ellen Clyne, PhD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Clara Maass Medical Center, an RWJBarnabas Health facility, where Dr. Ortiz is medical director of the Center of Excellence for Latino Health. “In 1984, he founded and established Forest Hill Family Health Associates in Newark’s North Ward to offer primary care at a time when Newark and its surrounding neighborhoods were continuing to recover from the unrest of the late 1960s. This was no easy feat; however, today Dr. Ortiz’s practice has experienced momentous growth, and in 2010, he received national recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Patient Centered Medical Home.”

Dr. Ortiz has served on many statewide task forces, commissions and committees representing primary care medicine and health information technology, and has received numerous accolades attesting to his efforts, including The Latino Center on Aging’s Gold Age Award and the Men of Vision honor from Newark City Council President, Hon. Mildred Crump. As founding CEO of Health Practice Management Corp., he established the Forest Hill Medical Arts Center for Specialty Care, bringing 16 subspecialty physicians into Newark’s North Ward.

Additionally, Dr. Ortiz was recently named the medical director of the New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII)-funded Garden Practice Transformation Network, which is tasked with bringing practice transformation support services and value-based alternative payment models to primary care practitioners. He has previously served as a past president of NJAFP.

As the 2018 New Jersey Family Physician of the Year, Dr. Ortiz will become the NJAFP's nominee for the 2019 National Family Physician of the Year, presented by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Ortiz is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, Latino Student Health Organization of New Jersey Medical School and Physicians for a National Health Plan, among others. He earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Upsala College in East Orange and attended Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (formally University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey) in Newark. He completed an internship in family medicine at Mountainside Hospital in Montclair and his residency in family medicine at Mountainside Family Practice Associates in Verona.

He resides in Montclair with his wife Myrna, a retired physical therapist, and has three married children and four grandchildren.

#### **About the NJAFP**

For more than 65 years, the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians has been advancing the cause of family physicians and their patients. With more than 2,000 members, including active practicing family physicians, residents in family medicine, and medical students interested in the specialty, the NJAFP is the largest primary care medical specialty society in the state and a chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. To learn more about NJAFP, visit [www.njafp.org](http://www.njafp.org).

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