

SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

Open Society Award

Description/Vision/Purpose

This award will be given each year to recognize an individual or group who embodies and promotes an Open Society, through research, practice, and/or teaching.

An open society is one where justice is the same for every man (and woman) [sic]; where dissent is taken seriously as an index of something wrong or something needed; where diversity is respected; where pressure groups cannot stifle and control the will of the majority or castigate the individual; where education brings upward mobility to all; where the best of health care is available to all; where poverty is a community disgrace not an individual's weakness; where greed for possessions and success is replaced by inner fires for excellence and honor; where desires for power **over** men (and women) become satisfactions with the use of power **for** men (and women). *

~ Dorothy B. Nyswander, PhD
"Tenth Dorothy B. Nyswander Lecture"
Berkeley, California, 1966

Dr. Dorothy B. Nyswander pioneered health education, mentored many public health leaders, and had an illustrious career spanning more than six decades at international, national, regional, and community levels. As illustrated in the quote above Dr. Nyswander was ahead of her time in advocating for equality and justice for ALL people, and was one of the first to introduce the concept of an "Open Society". One of her first community health initiatives included setting up day care centers during World War II for women working in defense plants. Dr. Nyswander passed away on December 18, 1998, at the age of 104.

*(Note: Please be aware that Dr. Nyswander's quote has been slightly revised to include reference to women as well as men. The original quote was a reflection of the time period in which it was created and that if alive today to once again speak about her vision of an Open Society, there is no doubt her speech would use inclusive language such as men, women, and transgender people rather than "men" only.)

This individual or group uses activism in institutionalizing an Open Society that:

- Actively engages in initiatives that promote equality and justice for all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, or physical ability;
- Advocates for and initiates dialogue and action to address health injustices affecting marginalized communities;
- Participates in activities that endorse education as a means of individual and community advancement and growth and;
- Views poverty as a societal responsibility and from an ecological perspective.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Applies health education and promotion processes to catalyze and significantly advance social change that fosters access to quality healthcare and health promoting initiatives for marginalized populations.
2. Possesses practitioner acumen and demonstrates strong communication capacity for learning about and addressing the ecological factors that make system changes and demonstrate evidence of improving a community's quality of life.

3. Creates and actively endorses internal policies and/or infrastructures that lead collective teams of professionals in significant strides toward the reduction of health disparities as well as advocate for inclusion and equality.
4. Serves as a visionary, courageous leader that advocates for, and gives voice to health injustices that affect marginalized communities.
5. Nominators must be a National SOPHE member; nominees are not required to be National SOPHE members. (Membership status can be verified through the National SOPHE office, 202/408-9804).

Requirements for Nominations:

1. Nomination Form.
2. Nomination letter describing how the nominee has demonstrated the values of an Open Society as stated above, including summarizing nominee's work.
3. Five Letters of Support speaking to the qualities of the nominee (minimum 2 letters of support must come from National SOPHE members).
4. One to two examples of written materials related to nominee's work (e.g., manuscript, syllabus, policy/white paper, etc...).
5. For an individual nominee, a recent curriculum vitae. For an organization nominee, a recent annual report.

Monetary Award

The award recipient(s) will receive a free, one-year membership in National SOPHE (for non-SOPHE members) and a \$250 monetary award, which may be used to further the work of the individual or group. Awards will be given at the SOPHE Awards Banquet, at the Annual Meeting.

Note: *Awards are recommended by the SOPHE Awards Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees.

****Nominations and support letters are due in the SOPHE National Office by July 31st of each calendar year****