Aurora Health Care receives Governor's 2002 Diamond Award

Aurora is first health care provider to receive recognition for diversity efforts from the Wisconsin Glass Ceiling Commission

MILWAUKEE, Oct. 16, 2002 – Aurora Health Care has been named a recipient of the 2002 Governor's Diamond Award. The award recognizes businesses and organizations implementing innovative initiatives to provide women and people of color with enhanced employment opportunities in upper management and decision-making positions.

Aurora is the first health care provider in the history of the award to be recognized for efforts to build a more diverse and skilled Wisconsin workforce.

"We appreciate the state's recognition of our efforts to build a workforce and leadership team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve," said G. Edwin Howe, Aurora president.

"We're thrilled to receive the award. It's a reflection of the commitment we've made to find better ways to enhance the skills, talents and diversity of people throughout our organization."

According to Rhonda Taylor Parris, director of workforce planning for Aurora, the Wisconsin Glass Ceiling Commission team of reviewers evaluated Aurora's diversity training and a comprehensive diversity plan that is an integral part of Aurora's strategic plan. The plan includes a process of revising job descriptions wherever possible to provide greater flexibility and broader employment opportunities.

Taylor Parris said the reviewers were also interested in elements of Aurora's plan that focus on coaching and mentoring new leaders, and on a program called the Aurora Leadership Academy.

"The Leadership Academy provides skill building and career development opportunities and enables people to develop project management skills," said Taylor Parris. "The Academy was established three years ago to help us build the strength of our workforce and develop future leaders."

The Governor's Diamond Award is the first program of its kind in the nation. It recognizes private businesses, non-profit organizations and public agencies that have made significant progress in areas such as career development and mentoring programs, internal support systems to help promote advancement, and innovative recruitment and advancement methods for people of color and women.

Aurora was one of five winners announced on October 16 at the Governor's Diamond Award luncheon, held on the final day of the State's Economic Summit in Milwaukee. Other recipients included Miller Brewing Company, Daimler-Chrysler, Independence First and United Government Services.

Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a nationally recognized leader in efforts to improve the quality of care. Aurora currently employs 23,400 people serving in care sites in more than 75 communities throughout eastern Wisconsin.