

## NESHCo Lifetime Achievement Award

The New England Society for Healthcare Communications Awards - Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient to Thomas Link of New Hampshire

The New England Society for Healthcare Communications (NESHCo) is pleased to announce that Thomas Link of Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Hitchcock Keene, a 30-year veteran of healthcare marketing and communications, was awarded the prestigious Evans Houghton Memorial Award at the association's annual conference held May 25 in Stowe, Vt.

The Evans Houghton Award was established by NESHCo's Board of Directors to honor the memory of Evans F. Houghton, one of the Society's founders who died an untimely death in 1974. The award honors an individual for exemplary performance and significant contributions in the field of health care public relations; selfless dedication to other practitioners without any thought of personal gain and boldly challenging themselves and their peers to excel, with the highest standards of conduct and professionalism.

"What puts Tom Link above many in the profession is his ability to accomplish public relations and marketing efforts that bring about significant cultural change in the community, region and state, to improve the quality and health of individuals, families and children," said Jim Rattray, Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs at Southcoast Health System in New Bedford, Mass., NESHCo board member, 2003 Evans Houghton winner and chair of this year's committee. "He is a cutting-edge practitioner who was one of the first to have a full website for his hospital and who's work results in changing people's perceptions of healthcare or embracing their own pursuit of a healthy lifestyle."

Link's experience in healthcare runs includes his position as hospital administrator, to community leader and activist, to board member in a variety of professional associations and finally to leading medical mission trips to Haiti, where he utilizes his clinical experience as a physician's assistant.

For more than 30 years, Link has invoked his vision to make communities healthier. His present position at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene has combined his fundraising and healthcare knowledge to address the needs of the people who live in and around Keene and his passion to make Keene, N.H., the healthiest community in America in by the year 2020 has been impressive. His role at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene has proven a model for other Dartmouth-Hitchcock initiatives and allowed Link to be visible and active with the New Hampshire Hospital Association's Communications and Marketing group.

Link has had a large impact as a community volunteer, particularly in the area of childcare. He is considered a the "founding father" of Child First, a childcare advocacy organization in New Hampshire's Mondadnock Region. and continues his efforts there today. He is a Past President of the Keene Family YMCA and served on that board for 10 years. He currently chairs and has been an active Board Member of the Keene Partner City Committee since 1998. He is presently is Chair of on the Keene Mayor's Municipal Broadband Committee and Chair of the Council for a Healthier Community. He is a past Chair of Keene's Community Health Education Cooperative and is a former Co-Chair of the Mayor's Task Force on Childcare. His work with Child First Early Learning New Hampshire earned Link the prestigious "Dorothy Cleveland Award," which recognizes exemplary practices in high-quality childcare. He also served on the board of Early Learning NH for eight years and was the recipient of the Early Learning Champion Award in 2007.

### About NESHCo

For four decades, NESHCo has served as the region's premier professional development organization for communication professionals working in the health care industry. The Society is composed of nearly 300 members throughout New England.