



Department of Justice



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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HONORS FLORIDA WOMAN WITH PROFESSIONAL INNOVATION IN VICTIM SERVICES AWARD

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, presented JoNell Efantis Potter with the Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services. This award recognizes an individual or individuals from a discipline outside the victim assistance field for their service to victims and contributions to the crime victims’ field.

“Dr. Potter is a distinguished practitioner who has placed her considerable knowledge and expertise in the service of some of the most vulnerable and underserved members of our society,” said OJP Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen A. Henneberg. “We are very fortunate that she has chosen to dedicate her impressive skills and her talent for innovation to those who have been so mercilessly – and often brutally – exploited.”

JoNell E. Potter, Ph.D., FAAN, APRN, is a trailblazer in the innovation of a medical model of care for survivors of human trafficking. A Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, with joint appointments in the Department of Pediatrics and School of Nursing and Health Studies, she has contributed to several influential research studies over the past 40 years that have transformed health practices for women and for survivors of all forms of human trafficking. She founded the Trafficking Healthcare Resources and Intra-disciplinary Victim Services and Education (THRIVE) Clinic at the University of Miami, one of the first such clinics in the nation devoted solely to the medical and mental health care of survivors of human trafficking.

Dr. Potter and her healthcare team have trained healthcare professionals to identify and respond appropriately to the needs of human trafficking patients, particularly in emergency departments. She has fought to influence public policy, leading efforts to change Medicaid regulations by expanding coverage to human trafficking survivors. In 2017, she received the Advocate of the Year Award from the Women’s Fund Miami-Dade and the Visionary Award from the Katherine Fernandez Rundle State Attorney’s Office in honor of her groundbreaking work with the THRIVE Clinic.

“Victims of human trafficking historically have been overlooked and unable to access critical treatment services, so it is a very welcome sign of progress to see an eminent professional like Dr. Potter working so hard on their behalf,” said OVC Acting Director Katherine Darke Schmitt. “We commend her researching the challenges these survivors face and for making the medical community an important ally in restoring their health and wellness.”

Every April, OVC leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims’ Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. The 40th anniversary of NCVRW

took place this year, April 18-24, and featured the theme, “Support Victims. Build Trust. Engage Communities,” which emphasizes the importance of leveraging community support to victims.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance racial equity in the administration of justice, assist victims and enhance the rule of law. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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