2002 Ernest Amory Codman Award Winner

Individual Award

John Noble, M.D., Director for the Center for Primary Care Boston University School of Medicine

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations has honored John Noble, M.D., by presenting him with a special Ernest A. Codman Award for his unique contributions in creating and sustaining the Joint Commission's annual quality awards. Named for the physician regarded in health care as the "father of outcomes measurement," the Ernest A. Codman Award recognizes organizations and individuals for excellence in the use of performance measurement to achieve improvements in the quality and safety of health care.

Since its creation in 1997, Dr. Noble has worked tirelessly to champion the Codman Award and to showcase the Award's recipients. During this time, he has helped to refine the Award criteria and to expand the Award categories, and he has led the Codman Award Evaluation Committee in the selection of Codman recipients each year. With the presentation of the 2002 awards and the completion of his tenure on the Joint Commission's Board of Commissioners, Dr. Noble has stepped down as the Codman Award Evaluation Committee Chair. He will, however, continue to serve as a member of the expert panel.

"As a Bostonian and lifelong student of medical history, it was more than fitting that Dr. Noble would come to be associated with Dr. Codman," says Dennis S. O'Leary, M.D., president, Joint Commission. "They have both been cutting-edge leaders of their time."

Dr. Noble is the director for the Center for Primary Care at the Boston University School of Medicine, and lead auditor and editor of the definitive national textbook for Primary Care. He is also the founder of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors and a frequent speaker both on the state and national level on patient safety issues.

Like Dr. Codman, Dr. Noble believes strongly in recording observations and tracking patient outcomes. He has advocated simple steps – such as writing down the diagnosis for each patient on each visit, even if the patient visits regularly, and how the patient is doing. He also advocates great reliance on team care – involving case managers, nurse practitioners and other professionals – because such an approach gives doctors more time with patients and opportunities to use clinical information to provide timely feedback to patients and make appropriate modifications in their care.