

Squires retring as president of Endowment for Health

By DENIS PAISTE
New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — Colleagues praised Endowment for Health founding president Dr. James W. Squires, who will retire at year-end, for promoting health care in the state.

"Dr. Squires, as a man, has one of the highest levels of integrity of anybody that I've met in my personal life," state Commissioner of Health and Human Services Nick Toumpas said.

Toumpas said as commissioner, he has embraced a core principle espoused by Squires, "person-centered health."

"He had been a leader in that area long before March 24, 2010, when the Affordable Care Act became law," Toumpas said.

Mary Vallier-Kaplan, currently vice president and chief operating officer, will serve as interim president in 2012, while a search is conducted for



DR. SQUIRES

a new president.

The Endowment for Health was formed with \$80 million in proceeds from the sale of non-profit Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Hampshire to for-profit Anthem Insurance Companies in 1999, one of just four such "conversion foundations" in the state.

"We were extremely fortunate that an individual of Jim Squires' caliber came forward to be the president," Terry Knowles, assistant director of charitable trusts, with the New Hampshire Department of Justice, said.

Squires, 73, brought to the position experience as a general and vascular surgeon, a founder of Matthew Thornton Health Plan, the state's first health maintenance organization, and a state Senator. He

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NICK TOUMPAS
New Hampshire Commissioner of Health and Human Services

also ran for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in 2000.

"He was the right choice for that position and his leadership has been extraordinary during the past 10 years," Knowles said.

Dr. Sylvio L. Dupuis a former state health commissioner, chaired the search for a founding president for the Endowment.

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"He was able to be a real spokesman for health care reform, and I think a lot of the changes that are going on now in the state are a result of that," Dupuis said. "He recognized he could be an independent voice because it was a private, non-profit foundation."

Ned Helms, director of the N.H. Institute for Health Policy and Practice, has known Squires since the early 1970s. "Everything he has touched has been tremendously important; he's been a real visionary," Helms said.

"He's sort of a modern-day Renaissance man in terms of the areas he's touched and the way he has influenced the state," he said.

Under Squires' leadership, the Endowment for Health

has awarded more than 750 grants, totaling more than \$32 million to support a wide range of health-related programs and projects in New Hampshire.

Cordell Johnston, chairman of the Endowment's board, said the impact of grants the Endowment has made and advancing health as a public policy issue will be Squires' lasting legacy.

A search committee will be formed to find a successor. Johnston hopes to select a search firm by the end of the year and start soliciting names of possible successors early in 2012.

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