



Dr. Christoffel remembered for injury prevention expertise, research career

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Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, of Minneapolis, died June 11 at age 74 of cancer.

A researcher and giant in the field of injury prevention, her work covered vehicle safety, sleep behaviors, firearm violence prevention and obesity prevention.

Dr. Christoffel was founder of the Handgun Epidemic Lowering Plan (HELP) Network, which strives to educate and mobilize the medical and public health communities on gun injury prevention. In 2002, she founded the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicagoland Communities and formed the Pediatric Practice Research Group in 1984.

She was the inaugural director of Northwestern University's Community-Engaged Research Center and served as associate director of the university's Institute for Public Health and Medicine's master of public health program.

Throughout a four-decade career at Northwestern, Dr. Christoffel was a pillar of innovation at the university's Feinberg School of Medicine. As a professor of pediatrics and preventive medicine, she authored more than 150 peer-reviewed publications.

Dr. Christoffel received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Medical Council on Gun Violence in 2016, the Daniel Hale Williams Award for Distinguished Service to Underserved Communities in 2011 and the American Pediatric Association Research Award in 2000.

Dr. Christoffel was a member of the AAP Sections on Epidemiology; Gastroenterology and Nutrition; and Injury and Poison Prevention.

“I fondly remember Dr. Christoffel’s support and encouragement as we modeled elements of our nascent Child Health Advocacy Institute at Children’s National Hospital in Washington, D.C., after her groundbreaking HELP Network in Chicago,” said Joseph L. Wright, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, incoming AAP chief health equity officer and senior vice president, equity initiatives. “She could not have been a more generous and passionate role model for so many of us finding our way in public health, community-based participatory research and child health advocacy.”

Dr. Christoffel graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine in 1973, completed her residency at McGaw Medical Center at Northwestern University in 1975 and clinical fellowship at Northwestern and Children’s Memorial Hospital, now known as Lurie Children’s.

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