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**The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services
Announces the First Geiger Gibson Distinguished Visitor in Health Policy**

WASHINGTON, DC—The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services (SPHHS) announced that James Hunt, president and chief executive officer of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, has been named the First Geiger Gibson Distinguished Visitor in Community Health Policy.

The Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy was established this year to honor Drs. Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, pioneers in community health practice and untiring advocates for civil and human rights. The program is designed to celebrate their work and that of health centers throughout the nation and to create the next generation of leaders in health policy for medically underserved populations. The Distinguished Visitorship is awarded to an individual who has exhibited extraordinary and sustained leadership in community health policy.

“We are so proud that The George Washington University has chosen one of our own—Jim Hunt—to inaugurate such an important program,” said Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). “Jim Hunt has provided key leadership in Massachusetts and across the country on the important role health centers play in ensuring that low-income residents have access to the best healthcare around. Jim’s selection is a tribute to the state of Massachusetts and to its strong network of health centers that have been providing quality care to hundreds of thousands of people since 1965.”

“Massachusetts is home to the first community health center in the nation, so Jim Hunt’s appointment as the program’s first Distinguished Visitor is fitting,” said James E. Luisi, board chair of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers. “Jim’s contributions in Massachusetts have been remarkable over the last 27 years; it is gratifying to our membership that his success will be shared in a national academic setting.”

Tom Van Coverden, president of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), said, “As a proud sponsor of the Geiger Gibson Program, NACHC is thrilled that Jim Hunt—a veteran of nearly 30 years of tireless work on behalf of health centers in Massachusetts and across the country—has been chosen to launch the Visitorship program.”

Hunt has been involved in the MassLeague since 1979 and has led its work for many years. Over this time, Hunt’s advocacy on behalf of the state’s poorest communities has brought tens of millions of dollars in community healthcare funding as well as ongoing capital investment and financial support for one of the nation’s finest health center networks. Hunt has also led efforts to educate the next generation of health center leaders through a collaboration with a local educational institution to develop a first-in-the-nation advanced training program expressly tailored to the needs of health center management staff.

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As the First Distinguished Visitor, Hunt will teach and write on matters of community health policy. He will also play a major role in helping shape educational events related to the 40th Anniversary Year celebration of health centers' founding. These events include a symposium in March 2005, as well as the launching of the Health Center History Project, the goal of which is to chronicle the history of every U.S. health center over a 10-year time period.

“It is indeed fitting that our first Distinguished Visitor should come from the birthplace of the health centers movement, and we could not have found a more wonderful candidate to honor the work of Jack Geiger and Count Gibson,” said Ruth J. Katz, JD, MPH, Dean and Walter G. Ross Professor of Health Policy, GW SPHHS.

Sara Rosenbaum, Hirsh Professor and chair of the Department of Health Policy, said, “Jim Hunt's work on behalf of health centers and their patients offers our faculty and students an unparalleled example of community health policy leadership. We cannot think of an individual who more embodies the spirit of the Visitorship program.”

The George Washington University Medical Center is an internationally recognized interdisciplinary academic health center, which has consistently provided high quality medical care in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area since 1825. The Medical Center comprises the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the 11th oldest medical school in the country; the School of Public Health and Health Services, the only such school in the nation's capital; GW Hospital, jointly owned and operated by a partnership between The George Washington University and Universal Health Services, Inc.; and GW Medical Faculty Associates, an independent faculty practice plan. For more information on GWUMC, visit www.gwumc.edu.

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