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**The Peoples Health Champions Program Celebrates 15 Years of Honoring Local Seniors**

- *Program recognizes exceptional seniors who have achieved amazing things after age 65*
- *More than 140 Louisianans, including eight in 2018, have been honored at New Orleans Saints' home games*

**METAIRIE, La. (Jan. 7, 2019)** – Peoples Health is celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Peoples Health Champions Program, which has honored more than 140 Louisiana seniors who have achieved extraordinary accomplishments after age 65. The company recognized the eight 2018 Champions during special on-field presentations at each of the New Orleans Saints home games during the 2018-2019 regular season.

Peoples Health established the Champions Program in collaboration with the Saints in 2003 to recognize exceptional seniors who shatter the myth that getting older means slowing down. The program honors individuals who prove that excellence is achieved through experience, and it challenges common misconceptions about aging by celebrating people who have accomplished great things because of their age, not in spite of it.

“As one of the largest Medicare Advantage companies serving older adults in Louisiana, we see firsthand how seniors inspire and lead their communities,” said Warren Murrell, Peoples Health CEO. “We started the Peoples Health Champions Program to spotlight older adults who use their expertise and passion gained from a lifetime of experience to accomplish amazing things.”

Each Champion is treated to a once-in-a-lifetime experience of being honored at a Saints home game in front of nearly 70,000 fans. During the 2018-2019 Saints regular season, the following individuals were recognized as Peoples Health Champions:

- Joseph “Big Chief Monk” Boudreaux for his efforts to preserve Mardi Gras Indian culture and traditions (Buccaneers vs. Saints, Sept. 9)
- June Etta Ruiz, who came out of retirement at age 80 to help provide around-the-clock in-home care to a client in need (Browns vs. Saints, Sept. 16)
- Estelle Coffman, who at age 78 accomplished her goal of completing a bicycle trip in each of the 50 states (Redskins vs. Saints, Oct. 8)
- Peaches Davis for earning her first credited speaking role in a major motion picture in her 80s (Rams vs. Saints, Nov. 4)
- Betty Wells for starting a new career as the official greeter for Ochsner Medical Center at age 75 (Eagles vs. Saints, Nov. 18)
- Gayle Benson for securing Super Bowl LVIII for the City of New Orleans (Falcons vs. Saints, Nov. 22)
- Gladys Hughes, a World War II veteran and educator, who at age 95 finished her sixth season of judging the Ms. Veteran America competition (Steelers vs. Saints, Dec. 23)

- Walter Wolfman Washington, who at age 74 released an album he always wanted to make — stripped down and soulful, featuring voice and lyrics over instrumental backings (Panthers vs. Saints, Dec. 30)

“We are continually inspired by the people we have had the opportunity to honor over the past 15 seasons,” said Ben Hales, senior vice president and chief operating officer of the New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Pelicans. “With Peoples Health, we have been able to spotlight outstanding members of our community who are making a real difference in all our lives. We are grateful to our Champions and Peoples Health, and we look forward to continuing what has become a great game-day tradition.”

A committee composed of community leaders selects the Champions each year. The 2018 committee included Angela Hill, television personality, David Manship, former publisher of *The Advocate*, and John Young, Jr., past Jefferson Parish president.

Nominees must be at least 65 years of age and reside in Louisiana. They do not need to be enrolled in a Peoples Health Medicare Advantage plan to be considered for the award. Nominations are accepted throughout the year. For more information about the program, including nomination details, visit <http://champions.peopleshealth.com>, or call 1-877-712-7320.

### ***About Peoples Health***

Established in 1994, Peoples Health serves nearly 75,000 people in Louisiana through a variety of Medicare Advantage plans. Peoples Health Medicare Advantage plans are NCQA accredited and have been rated 4.5 out of 5 stars by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for 2018 and 2019, making them the highest-rated plans in the state. Founded by physicians and part of UnitedHealthcare, the company administers and provides a unique approach to wellness, care coordination and support services for Louisiana seniors and other beneficiaries. Peoples Health supports many social, cultural, athletic and health organizations. Visit <http://www.peopleshealth.com> for more information.



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