



## State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIXKI R. HAIEY  
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET  
COLUMBIA 29201

### Application for Governor's Awards

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Nominee's Name: James Peter Van Dorsten, M.D.

Nominee's Address: [REDACTED]

Nominee's Cell Phone: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

Award Sought: Order of the Palmetto

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**Nominee's Accomplishments – Instructions:** Please provide a thorough and detailed biographical statement on the Nominee's accomplishments. Please give examples of the Nominee's achievements where the Nominee has gone above and beyond his or her personal or professional responsibilities and has made a significant impact on the lives of South Carolinians. Please attach additional page(s) as needed.

Dr. Van Dorsten is a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist who has improved the quality of health care for many South Carolinians and deserves the Order of the Palmetto. He is currently the Lawrence L. Hester Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and has served in this capacity for 12 years. Prior to his appointment to this position, he was the Vice Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MUSC since 1992. During his tenure at MUSC, Dr. Van Dorsten has gone beyond the call of duty for the betterment of residents of the State of South Carolina. His accomplishments in the field of Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) and as a leader in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MUSC have had far reaching effects across the state.

He is a leader in the field of MFM and is arguably the most influential MFM the state has produced. MFM is a subspecialty of Obstetrics/Gynecology devoted to the care of the complicated pregnancy whether due to a maternal medical condition such as diabetes, a fetal problem such as a heart defect, or an obstetrical complication such as preterm labor. He is the member of multiple medical societies and, more importantly, has been a leader in several of these societies including the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the North American Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, and the American Gynecological Club.

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Among the highlights of his national service, his service as President of the Society of the Maternal Fetal Medicine, an organization of MFM specialists dedicated to improving outcomes for both mothers and babies, has been extremely beneficial to the state of South Carolina. Through his position in this Society, he has been able to elevate other South Carolinians into leadership positions including Dr. Donna Johnson and Dr. Roger Newman and, in doing so; he has established the Medical University of South Carolina as one of the leading institutions in high-risk obstetric care in the country. This has directly led to increased funding to our state for both research and clinical outreach. It has also allowed us to have more input into the vision and direction of the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine. His influence in each of these areas has led to an increased recognition of the issue of preterm birth which is a problem that plagues South Carolina.

His other major accomplishment on a national level that has improved the welfare of South Carolinians has been through his participation first as a principal investigator in the Maternal Fetal Medicine Units Network (MFMU), and most currently as the Chairman of the MFMU Steering Committee since 2006. The MFMU is a group of leading academic institutions funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) across the country dedicated to conducting research with a focus on improving maternal and fetal outcomes and, in particular, prevention of preterm birth, a major problem in South Carolina. In the field of obstetrics, this is the group that has provided the most significant practice-changing research. The benefit of this research has been felt in our state directly.

The increased recognition of prematurity as a major issue has directed research and preventative efforts that have ultimately led to improvements in care in South Carolina over the past 5-10 years and the first decline in the preterm birth rate seen in this state. This has led to significant cost savings through reductions in neonatal intensive care, reductions in complications of prematurity, and improved the overall health of children born in this state. His efforts in this area are discussed in further detail below.

In 2004, the MFMU published research demonstrating that the use of the hormone progesterone in certain patients reduces the risk of premature birth. In the Low Country, through the early adoption of this practice and education of fellow South Carolina obstetricians and leadership of MUSC, reductions in preterm birth <28 weeks and neonatal intensive care unit admissions were seen. As MUSC's influence under Dr. Van Dorsten's leadership has spread across the state through educational efforts by our Department, dissemination of obstetrician/gynecologists who have trained at MUSC, and through various outreach efforts by our Department to the Low Country and the Pee Dee, we have witnessed increased adoption of this beneficial intervention. We are hopeful that through these efforts, a continued reduction in preterm birth will be seen across our state in the coming years.

In addition to the use of progesterone, most recently, Dr. Van Dorsten and the MFMU have focused on prevention of what is termed late preterm birth, which encompasses babies that are born electively prior

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to 39 weeks of gestation. This is an entirely preventable occurrence and has required the leadership of the MFMU and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine among others to get addressed. National efforts have led to a partnership between South Carolina hospitals and Medicaid in our state to prevent these deliveries. This is estimated to save at least \$1 million dollars in hospital costs and \$7 million dollars annually in hospital costs for babies across the state of South Carolina.

Dr. Van Dorsten has not only represented the Palmetto state on a national basis to improve that status of health care, he has also directly made an impact through his efforts at MUSC. As the Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, he has trained countless medical students, residents in obstetrics and gynecology, and fellows in maternal fetal medicine. Many of these individuals practice medicine in South Carolina today and owe part of their education to Dr. Van Dorsten. He is a beloved and oft awarded medical educator who has won local, regional, and national teaching awards. Some of these include the medical student teacher of the year for the Ob/Gyn rotation, the Council on Resident Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology (CREOG) Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education, and the Golden Apple Teaching Award at MUSC.

His mentorship and guidance has had a profound influence on physicians across the state and is difficult to measure. One area that is easy to see this influence is in his ability to recruit. Published evidence shows that the presence of Maternal Fetal Medicine specialists is directly related to a lower risk of maternal mortality. Unfortunately, South Carolina continues to have a high maternal mortality rate and formerly had one of the lowest densities of MFM specialists. Dr. Van Dorsten has addressed the paucity of MFM subspecialists in South Carolina through training, recruitment, and retention. During his tenure as Chairman, he has almost tripled the numbers of these subspecialists in Charleston from 5 to 10 Maternal Fetal Medicine subspecialists and 3 fellows for a total of 13 physicians.

The growth of the MFM Division at MUSC has been critical to South Carolina because it has allowed continued regionalization of perinatal health care in our state. The Piedmont Region is covered by MFM's in the Greenville Hospital System and at Spartanburg Regional Hospital. Meanwhile, starting April 2012, MFM's from MUSC recruited by Dr. Van Dorsten will cover the Pee Dee, Low Country, and the Midlands Regions through work done at MUSC and through arrangements with McLeod Hospital in Florence and the USC School of medicine. This will allow for a continued comprehensive, organized, and geographically structured approach to delivery of risk-appropriate care to mothers and their babies across the state of South Carolina.

As a physician, he has cared for mothers and delivered babies in the state for about 30 years dating back to his training as a resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology at MUSC. *Good Housekeeping*, *Who's Who*, and the Consumers' Research Council of America among others have recognized him as one of the top doctors in the country. While the majority of the beneficiaries of his care have been from the Low Country, his expertise has allowed patients who have been referred from across the entire state to receive care.

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Helping control health care costs is a responsibility of all physicians and Dr. Van Dorsten has excelled in his duties in this regard. As a leader across the state, Dr. Van Dorsten has had influence on the efficient spending of health care dollars through efforts in the maintenance of Perinatal Regionalization. This allows for efficient delivery of perinatal care statewide and the ability to concentrate high-level perinatal care to an appropriate number of medical centers thus saving costs due to duplicate and redundant services. Additionally, he has served as a Medical Director at Select Health. In this role, he helped direct policies that led to the efficient use of health care dollars.

In closing, it is hard to count the many ways Dr. Van Dorsten has richly contributed to the state of South Carolina. He has served as a physician, researcher, and educator in this state for 30 years. He has represented the state on a national basis and his influence has led to the betterment of obstetrical care nationally and in South Carolina as described above. There are few individuals in the field of medicine whose influence can be felt across the state (and even the country) to this degree. He has served the state in an exemplary fashion and well deserves the Order of the Palmetto.

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Nominator's Information

Name: Eugene Y. Chang, M.D.

Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Numbers: Cell: [REDACTED] Work: [REDACTED]

Signature: Eugene Y. Chang

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Please list the name of all co-endorsers who will provide a letter of recommendation.

Name: David E. Soper, M.D.

Lucy P. DiGiuseppe

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Orders of the Palmetto require a recommendation from at least one member of the corresponding delegation of the Nominee. Please be sure to provide this letter of recommendation along with the application.

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Please identify date/event for  
presentation of this award: June 24, 2012

Applications should be received no later than 60 days prior to requested date.

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2 April 2012

soperde@musc.edu

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to be able to enthusiastically support **J. Peter Van Dorsten, MD** as a candidate for the Order of the Palmetto. Dr. Van Dorsten has had a long and storied career as an obstetrician, and I have followed his career with much interest over the past 30 years. He has contributed significantly to the state of women's health care in the State of South Carolina. Dr. Van Dorsten is currently the Lawrence L. Hester Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and has served in this capacity for 12 years. Prior to his appointment to this position, he was appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Department in 1992. Moreover, he is a product of the Medical University of South Carolina as he completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology here.

Peter has been a leader in the field of Maternal Fetal Medicine both in the state of South Carolina as well as nationally. His scholarly activities and leadership have had an unsurpassed impact on the care of women and their unborn babies. His national accomplishments include service as the President of the Society of the Maternal Fetal Medicine, an organization of maternal fetal medicine specialists dedicated to improving outcomes for both mothers and babies. This position, and his superb mentorship, has led other South Carolinians to follow in his footsteps; Donna Johnson, MD and Roger Newman, MD. This has escalated the reputation of the Medical University of South Carolina as it is now recognized as one of the leading institutions in high-risk obstetrical care in the country. This reputation and his ability to recruit and retain excellent faculty has led directly to increased research funding for our state.

Dr. Van Dorsten also participated as a principal investigator in the Maternal Fetal Medicine Units Network (MFMU) and has been the chairman of the Steering Committee of this group since 2006. The MFMU is a group of leading academic institutions funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) across the country dedicated to conducting research with a focus on improving maternal and fetal outcomes and, in particular, prevention of preterm birth, a major problem in South Carolina. In the field of obstetrics, this group, under his leadership, has provided the most significant practice-changing research in obstetrics.

An example of the impact of Dr. Van Dorsten and the MFMU has been in the area of preterm birth. In 2004, the group demonstrated the value of progesterone, a female hormone, in reducing the rate of premature birth. In the Lowcountry, through the early adoption of this practice and through education of South Carolina obstetricians, reductions in preterm birth of <28 weeks and neonatal intensive care unit admissions were seen. As MUSC's influence has spread across the state under Dr. Van Dorsten's leadership, we have witnessed the increased adoption of this beneficial intervention. This is translated in health care cost savings of millions of dollars and improved outcomes for our babies.

"Late preterm birth," defined as babies born electively prior to 39 weeks of gestation, has been found to contribute to neonatal illness. This is an entirely preventable event. National efforts, coordinated by Dr. Van Dorsten here in South Carolina, have led to a partnership between South Carolina hospitals and Medicaid resulting in the prevention of these deliveries. This is estimated to save at least \$1 million dollars in maternal hospital costs and \$7 million dollars annually in hospital costs for babies across the state of South Carolina.

Dr. Van Dorsten has not only represented the Palmetto state on a national basis to improve that status of health care here, he has directly made an impact through his efforts at MUSC. As the Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, he has trained countless medical students, residents in obstetrics and gynecology, and fellows in maternal fetal medicine. Many of these individuals practice in South Carolina today and owe part of their education to Dr. Van Dorsten. He is a beloved and oft awarded medical educator and has won local, regional, and national teaching awards.

As a physician, he has cared for mothers and delivered babies in the state for 30 years dating back to his training as a resident in obstetrics and gynecology at MUSC. *Good Housekeeping*, *Who's Who*, and the Consumers's Research Council of America, among others, have recognized him as one of the top doctors in the country. While the majority of the beneficiaries of his care have been from the Lowcountry, his expertise has seen patients referred in from across the entire state. Dr. Van Dorsten has been responsible for an increase in these much needed subspecialists through training and retention as well as recruitment.

Finally, Dr. Van Dorsten has had influence on the efficient spending of health care dollars through efforts in the maintenance of the regionalization of high-level perinatal care here which is believed to result in better outcomes and to result in lower health care costs. As a medical director at Select Health, he has helped direct policies that have led to the efficient use of health care dollars. Helping control health care costs is a responsibility of all physicians, and Dr. Van Dorsten has excelled in his duties in this regard.

It is impossible to measure the impact that Dr. Van Dorsten has had on the healthcare of women and babies in the state of South Carolina. He has served as a physician, researcher, and educator in this state for more than 30 years. He has represented the state on a national basis, and his influence has led an improved standard of care in obstetrical care nationally and in South Carolina. I can think of few individuals in the field of medicine whose influence is this comprehensive. I hope you agree. Please consider this recommendation for awarding the Order of the Palmetto to Dr. Van Dorsten. I am happy to answer any questions regarding his qualifications for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DS", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David E. Soper, MD  
J. Marion Sims Professor  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Medical University of South Carolina.



# MUSC Health

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[www.musc.edu](http://www.musc.edu)

April 17, 2012

It is an honor to endorse the nomination of J. Peter Van Dorsten for recipient of the Order of the Palmetto. I have known Dr. VanDorsten since his second year of residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the Medical University of South Carolina in 1973 and have had the privilege of working closely with him since his return to South Carolina in 1992.

Dr. Van Dorsten attended Davidson College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine in North Carolina before his internship and residency at MUSC. Following completion of his training, he served in the U.S. Army in Berlin, Germany. Upon discharge from the Army, Dr. Van Dorsten did a fellowship in maternal fetal medicine at the University of California in Los Angeles. When this training was complete, he came home to South Carolina to join the Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MUSC as an assistant professor.

He left again in 1987 to become the Director of Maternal Fetal Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia. In 1992, he once again returned to his beloved Charleston and his adopted state to become the Vice Chairman and Residency Program Director. He was appointed chairman of the department in 2000.


During his time at MUSC, and especially during his tenure as chairman, the department has flourished in research, in the caliber of faculty and residents, and especially in patient care. Research funding has grown significantly from 2000 to the present. The department's reputation and that of Dr. Van Dorsten allows us to recruit top medical students to fill our residency slots each year. Many of these individual have remained in South Carolina to practice in their specialty. Likewise, our maternal-fetal medicine fellows are of the same caliber. We have grown from one single patient site to multiple sites within the Charleston area and additional subspecialty sites in Beaufort, the Grand Strand area, Florence and USC in Columbia.

Dr. Van Dorsten spends many hours each year mentoring students, residents, junior faculty and his peers. They come seeking his wisdom and guidance as they grow in the various stages of their careers. He has been an integral part in the training of our state's physicians and guiding them on to become leaders across the nation in their various specialties and subspecialties. He is honest, loyal and maintains the highest integrity. He makes everyone feel important and leads by example, and this is felt throughout the department. This is evidenced by a profound loyalty from those who work for him and with him and the very high retention rate of faculty and staff.

Dr. VanDorsten has dedicated much of his life to the care of the women of South Carolina. His efforts have resulted in changes that have improved the preterm birth rate in our state and thereby saving hospital costs for both mothers and babies but more importantly the cost of the life time care of infants who suffer permanent sequelae from preterm birth.

Dr. Van Dorsten is most deserving of the Order of the Palmetto and I urge your strongest consideration to this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lucy P. DiGiuseppe". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Lucy" being particularly prominent.

Lucy P. DiGiuseppe



## House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

### Murrell Smith

District No. 67 - Sumter-Clarendon  
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### Committees:

Judiciary

Criminal Laws

Subcommittee, Chairman

April 24, 2012

Governor Nikki Haley  
Office of the Governor  
Post Office Box 12267  
Columbia, SC 29211

RE: Order of The Palmetto Nomination

Dear Governor Haley:

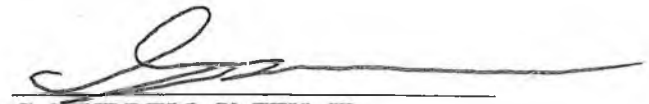
It is a great honor to write this letter endorsing Dr. Peter Van Dorsten to receive the Order of the Palmetto. Dr. Van Dorsten is a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist who has improved the quality of health care for many South Carolinians. His achievements are vast and have a far reaching effect on not only South Carolina's population, but the country as a whole. He is currently the Lawrence L. Hester Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and has served in this capacity for 12 years. Prior to his appointment to this position, he was the Vice Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MUSC since 1992. He is a leader in the field of Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) and is arguably the most influential MFM the state has produced. He has established the Medical University of South Carolina as one of the leading institutions in high risk obstetric care in the country. This has led directly to an increase in funding to our state for both research and clinical outreach resulting in an enhanced recognition of the issue of preterm birth a problem that plagues South Carolina.

Dr. Van Dorsten has not only represented the Palmetto state on a national basis to improve that status of health care here, he has directly made an impact through his efforts at MUSC. As the Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, he has trained countless medical students, residents in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and fellows in Maternal Fetal Medicine. Many of these individuals practice in South Carolina today and owe part of their education to Dr. Van Dorsten. In fact, Dr. Van Dorsten was a classmate of my father's during their OB/GYN residency at MUSC. Further, he trained my youngest brother during his OB/GYN residency at MUSC. Through their careers, you can easily observe the impact and respect a peer and pupil hold for Dr. Van Dorsten. He is a beloved and oft awarded medical educator and has won local, regional, and national teaching awards. He has won Medical Student teacher of the year for the Ob/GYN rotation, the Council on Resident Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology (CREOG) Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education, and the Golden Apple Teaching Award at MUSC.

Dr. Van Dorsten is truly an asset not only to the medical community in South Carolina, but also to our citizens. He exemplifies the characteristics of a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto. The impact he has made not only in South Carolina in his profession, but also the nation will be felt for years to come. It is a great honor that I am able to offer his name to receive the Order of the Palmetto.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely,

  
G. MURRELL SMITH, JR.

GMSjr:mln