



Physician of the Year

Dr. Sodienye Tetenta

Wyoming Medical Society
Physician of the Year saw hospital
ICU through COVID-19 pandemic

BY KELLY ETZEL DOUGLAS



LIZ PUTNAM PHOTOGRAPHY: Kathlene Mondanaro, DO, introduces Physician of the Year Sodienye Tetenta, MD, during the 25th Anniversary WWAMI Gala on Oct. 29 in Laramie.

Sodienye “Tet” Tetenta, MD, was not only a highly regarded physician during the COVID-19 pandemic, he was the guide for Cheyenne Regional Medical Center during the past two years, shepherding staff, patients, and families.

The pulmonologist and critical care physician was chosen as the Wyoming Medical Society’s 2022 Physician of the Year. He received the award during the 25th Anniversary WWAMI Gala at the Wyoming Medical Society’s annual meeting on Oct. 29 in Laramie.

Dr. Tetenta spoke during the event, recalling tending to his first COVID-19 patient at the intensive care unit in Cheyenne Regional. So much was unknown about the disease and how it spread, that even though he was wearing full protective gear, Dr. Tetenta was afraid of becoming ill himself. He checked his own temperature about 10 times that day, he said, and noticed that he still had a sense of smell. He finally told himself “no, you don’t have COVID, get back to work.”

“It’s okay to be afraid,” Dr. Tetenta said. He thanked his colleagues in the intensive care unit who returned to work every day, even when they were afraid, or when they had just cried for a patient who they lost to COVID-19. He spoke of his thankfulness for the nurses and custodial staff who did the same.

Kathlene Mondanaro, DO, hospitalist at the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, nominated Dr. Tetenta for the award.

“He is a beloved mentor, colleague, leader, and friend,” she said. “He literally carried Cheyenne Regional on his back for two years during the pandemic.”

Dr. Mondanaro explained how Dr. Tetenta, as chief of staff, expanded the intensive care unit by adding a 24-bed satellite unit in the beginning of the pandemic, growing capacity to 39 beds.

“The beds were full for a very long time,” she said. “He often said, ‘These are real people dying from real disease. We will do all that we can to help.’”

Through the pandemic, Dr. Tetenta was steadfast and unwavering, Dr. Mondanaro said. She also described him as an educator and mentor, who exuded grace, humor, integrity and kindness.

When Dr. Tetenta began speaking at the Oct. 29 event, he asked the room for a moment of silence, “to think about our colleagues who are not here because of the pandemic.”

As he concluded his remarks, Dr. Tetenta again reached out to his coworkers.

“I thank you for this award. This is for all of us, not just me,” Dr. Tetenta said. 