



August 9, 2021

# Thank you for completing your 2021 Community Star Individual Nominee Questionnaire!

## Overview

Here is a copy of your answers for your records. All nominations will be reviewed and evaluated by members of NOSORH's Community Star Selection Committee. One Community Star will be selected per state. If you are selected as your state's Community Star, I will work with you to schedule an interview so that we can develop your outstanding story to share in our annual book of Community Stars released on Thursday, November 18, 2021.

If you have any questions, please reach out to NRHD Community Star Project Coordinator, Brea Corsaro at [bcorsaro@powerofrural.org](mailto:bcorsaro@powerofrural.org).

## Your Information

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**Have Questions? Contact:**

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## Organization or Project Website

Please describe in as much detail as possible, your role within your organization and the nature of your work in rural health?

I am the medical director of telehealth at UAB. In this role I have strived to connect rural hospitals and providers to subspecialty care. UAB now provides telestroke, critical care, nephrology, infectious diseases , and general neurology to 15 hospitals most being rural. Furthermore, I worked with the alabama department of public health to get grants to put state of the art telehealth equipment in every county health department. I am currently working on expanding eConsults and remote patient monitoring to rural areas. I was the first person in the country to do telehealth with home dialysis patients in rural areas.

What inspired you to choose your career?

I am from Alabama and realized that we had an amazing healthcare entity in UAB but some of the worst healthcare outcomes . I wanted to remove the geographic ex use for these outcomes. Furthermore , I was doing basic science and realized that the dissemination of cutting edge medical care knowledge took 10 years at least to get from the University to standard of care elsewhere. Telehealth could help get all rural areas to state of the art knowledge much faster by having University physicians practice and in doing so teach directly in rural facilities.

What is the impact of your work in your community or the rural populations you serve?



The impact of telehealth in rural areas in Alabama has been transformative. Hospitals now have instant access to subspecialty care. In doing so we have been able to change the finances of these hospitals which allows them to stay open. If a hospital can't provide services they close and rural hospitals are closing everywhere. Telehealth in Alabama is changing that. Furthermore during covid there have been times when there were no beds in tertiary referral hospitals. Telehealth allowed for many more rural facilities to keep patients safely which opened up beds at tertiary referral centers. In the ambulatory space UAB did 280000 telehealth visits last year with many being in rural areas. Finally, I have given regional and National lectures on this area . I believe this is the way to restructure healthcare to make it more equitable and ensure the health of rural communities.

Have you accessed, benefited from, or worked directly with your State Office of Rural Health? If yes, please describe.

We are in the process for of working with the State Office of Rural Health and coordinate with the rural health resource center.

Are you or your organization a HRSA, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Grantee? If yes, which grant program? If yes, which one?

No

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