COMMUNITY STARS

August 23, 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.

Your Information

William Murray Buttner
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Organization or Project Website

https://www.ifhs.org

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

My partners and I practice in a very unique setting, even for

Alaska. There isn't another community of this size off the road system in Alaska that doesn't have a small hospital.

Unfortunately, the hospital here was destroyed in 1942 when the Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor in WWII (as part

of a side campaign in the North Pacific concurrent with the ill-fated attempt to capture Midway Island). So the IFHS

community health clinic is providing 24/7 care - including all of the emergency care - for Unalaska/Dutch Harbor

residents, the residents of a handful of 'nearby' communities (who come by small plane or boat), the workers of

the enormous shoreside fishing industry, and the vast fishing fleets of the Bering Sea. But because IFHS isn't a

hospital, it can't technically have an emergency room [at this time there are no freestanding emergency rooms in

Alaska], so the clinic provides all of this emergency care with the budget and staffing of a community health center.

We provide primary care for the year round residents and urgent/emergency care for the larger population. Many

of the workers in the fishing industry are from other countries and present with previously undiagnosed chronic

conditions. I am one of 3 full time physicians and the co-medical director. We have 2 outstanding full-time

midlevel providers and have locums providers helping in the busy months.

What inspired you to choose your career?

There is nothing like the intimacy and

variety of practicing rural family medicine. I have had several incredibly satisfying jobs in rural AK (and a 8

year stint in rural CT) and I have never regretted my career choice. It is an honor and a joy to be a small

town doc.

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

I like to think that we make it possible for people to live and work in this extremely remote community. We do our best trying to get ahead of problems, e.g.

public health and prevention, and we do a very good job of handling medical

emergencies.

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

No, I have not.

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

Yes

HRSA