COMMUNITY STARS

August 9, 2021

Thank you for submitting a nomination for Tamara Laws RN, BSN.

Overview

Thank you for your 2021 Community Star Nomination. Here is a copy of the nomination for your records. If you have any questions, please reach out to NRHD Community Star Project Coordinator, Brea Corsaro at bcorsaro@powerofrural.org.

Your Information

Katie Schweber, MPH
Quality Improvement Specialist
Colorado Rural Health Center
Aurora, Colorado
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Community Star Nominee: (Individual)

Tamara Laws RN, BSN
Population Health Nurse
Melissa Memorial Hospital
Holyoke, Colorado
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COMMUNITY STARS

Which best describes the organization your nominee is associated with?

Certified Rural Health Clinic
Rural Hospital

Please describe your connection to the individual or organization you are nominating.

Tamara has been involved in the Colorado Rural Health Center's (CRHC) Chronic Care Management (CCM) program since summer of 2020. She was very involved in the first cohort of the program and will be a community subject matter expert in this year's second cohort of the program.

Please explain the individual's or organization's connection to or interaction with their State Office of Rural Health.

See above. Melissa Memorial Health (MMH) has been an active member with CRHC. Their hospital and clinic team participated in CRHC's quality program, iCARE, for many years. They have attended and presented at CRHC webinars and conferences, and have a high level of engagement in all that they do with us.

The Community Star Recognition Program is designed to honor those whose contributions are making a difference in rural through collaboration, education, innovation, and communication. What do you believe to be your nominee's "star" qualities? Provide examples of how your nominee demonstrates these qualities in their work and service.

Tamara collaborates with her clinical team and CRHC staff. She has a close relationship with the providers she works with, which helps ensure a team-based approach to providing comprehensive patient care, especially as it relates to patients' chronic conditions. Tamara has collaborated with CRHC

to present on program webinars about how she and her team approach CCM, and she will be collaborating with us closely this coming year, as she will be the community subject matter expert for the program. Tamara provides relevant and understandable information to her patients, especially regarding their chronic disease(s), such as what their care plan is with their provider, what resources they can and should access, and self-management practices. She has created binders for patients containing their individualized information and helpful resources. Tamara has also been instrumental in starting remote patient monitoring for Melissa Memorial's CCM patients. Although RHCs are not currently reimbursed for this service, Tamara and her team have implanted remote patient monitoring with patients who have diseases that benefit from at-home monitoring to prevent more acute events. They have sought and received extra grant funding to support these efforts. Additionally, MMH's CCM team has been instrumental in implementing culturally relevant and language inclusive messaging for their patient population. Tamara's communications, both with CRHC and her own team, have made all of this work possible and have allowed other rural Colorado clinic teams to benefit from the knowledge and lessons-learned at MMH.

The 2021 Community Star Selection Committee will review and evaluate nominations, making recommendations for which stories to include in this year's book and other NRHD activities based on the following merits. Please review these and select all that apply to your nominee.

Builds capacity for rural data-driven program planning and decision making. , Contributes to rural health innovation, education, collaboration, and communication.

Describe in as much detail as possible, examples of your nominee's work and accomplishments that correspond with your selections to the question above.

Builds capacity for rural data-driven program planning and decision making – Tamara, along with her team, keeps a detailed registry of CCM patients, including how much time is spent with them each month, what labs they need, when their appointments are, etc. CCM is very data-driven and the team at MMH stays abreast of their CCM requirements, going beyond the minimum to help make their jobs more efficient and better serve their patients. Tamara also keeps close track of how many patients are enrolled in CCM, allowing MMH to grow their program to meet their goals and patient needs. Additionally, the MMH CCM team submits monthly data to CRHC to help track the progress of their patients who are diagnosed with hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, and those who have been readmitted to the hospital. We discuss this data together during monthly team calls and MMH also discusses and uses this data among their clinical teams to guide their goals and improve their performance.

Contributes to rural health innovation, education, collaboration, and communication – see above. Tamara's efforts with her patients and in improving MMH's CCM program create a thriving landscape for patient access in Holyoke. Tamara has been innovative in starting remote patient monitoring for CCM patients at Holyoke and has also implemented more culturally and linguistically inclusive patient messaging to better reach all patient populations within the community, especially ones that are marginalized, such as the Spanish-speaking community. Tamara educates her patients about their chronic disease(s), their care plan developed with their provider, and on disease self-management strategies. She has created patient education binders that contain pertinent information to each of her patients and their specific needs. Tamara goes extra lengths to serve her patients, especially ones that have enrolled in CCM who she hasn't heard

from, going as far as making house visits and talking to neighbors about the best ways to reach out to someone. Tamara connects her patients to the social resources in their community as part of her comprehensive patient care. She collaborates with community groups in this way, and is a collaborator with her clinical team on improving CCM processes and clinical care. She also collaborates with CRHC staff to help improve our CCM program. Her communication with patients is clear and all-encompassing, and her communication with her team and with CRHC has been effective and informative.

I can confirm that the individual or organization is making a difference in rural through collaboration, education, innovation, and communication, and is located, working, or volunteering in a designated rural area.

Yes

I can confirm that I have notified the nominee of their nomination, and the nomination will be accepted.

Yes

How did you learn about the 2021 Community Star Recognition Program?

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