



August 9, 2021

Thank you for submitting a nomination for Knicole Lee, DNP, MEd, MSN, FNP-BC.

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

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Community Star Nominee: (Individual)

Knicole Lee, DNP, MEd, MSN, FNP-BC

Chief Operations Officer

HealthHIE Community Center

Baxley, Georgia

Have Questions? Contact:

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Which best describes the organization your nominee is associated with?

Other

Private Non-Profit Primary Care and Outreach Center

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

The State Office of Rural Health has partnered with Dr. Lee and HealthIE Georgia to support outreach services, innovative projects and community assessments to meet the needs of the most rural and at-risk areas in Georgia. Dr. Lee has implemented primary care services in areas where there were limited access through new clinic set-up. She has built and implemented a Rural Health Preceptor Program for Graduate Nurse Practitioner Students in both the Family Practice and Psych-Mental Health concentrations. This program not only supports students having a rural rotation for experience in caring for at-risk populations with limited resources, but, also supports rural areas being able to spotlight themselves with the goal of growing and training providers to address the workforce shortage. The State Office of Rural Health has supported successful grant efforts that Dr. Lee and her team have received through data analytics, needs assessment coordination and sharing of data, letters of support and then implementation of projects as needed specific to the projects themselves. Dr. Lee has worked with rural areas where hospitals have closed to attempt to jumpstart healthcare services in these areas to bridge gaps in both urgent and primary care.

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

Dr. Lee is both a healthcare administrative leader and primary care provider. In addition, she is an Assistant Professor at Valdosta State University where she teaches in the Graduate Program. Her connection to the State Office of Rural Health runs deep and broad. Her administrative diversity enhances her ability to access communities and entities in need or in despair and then design projects to affect change. Through her clinical expertise she and her team work to build and implement program, protocols and evidenced based models like her COINS Model that are innovative and strive to meet the behavioral health and primary care needs of Rural Georgia. Workforce shortages are always a focus of the State Office of Rural Health. Dr. Lee's faculty position with Valdosta State University promotes and provides training opportunities for graduate nursing students in rural areas in Georgia to support "Growing Georgia's Healthcare Providers" of the future.

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.

Collaboration:

Dr. Lee's COINS Model was utilized to apply for and successfully be awarded the 1st SAMHSA CCBHC (Certified Community Behavior Health Center) Grant in Georgia in Collaboration with Pineland Community Service Board. She has spear-headed the project from site remodel and design to implementation of service lines, collaboration and implementation of an in-house retail



pharmacy and implement transportation services for clients in rural Georgia regardless of their payor source. This award brought 4 million dollars to Rural Georgia over 2 years to implement the CCBHC Certification Process. She has shared her model with three additional Rural Community Service Boards for application of CCBHC funding to expand and unify service delivery for consumers receiving services at their sites through her COINS Model.

Patients seen at the COINS Center located in Baxley, GA can receive Behavioral Health, Primary Care and Pharmacy services all under one roof. Care Coordination and Management, Transportation Services and Educational Outreach is available for patients on an as needed basis. Dr. Lee has an Education Coordinator that works with youth who are at-risk on both academic and self-esteem needs. Adults can utilize services to improve literacy and receive assistance for GED obtainment or furthering their education either at the technical or college level, but, that don't have anyone to help them with the process. For patients with disabilities 504 service obtainment as appropriate is also supported for patients to encourage program success and completion.

The award of the HRSA Rural Health Outreach Grant will expand services to rural areas for education, wellness, transportation and specialty needs focusing specifically on people with disabilities and autism services training, education and provision implementation. Partnering with local school systems, therapy service centers and community service boards these much needed services will become a reality to support families receiving much needed care without having to travel distances greater than 50 miles one way for treatment plan needs.

Education:

Dr. Lee has published articles related to implementing collaborative care models and working to meet the needs of at-risk populations with co-occurring conditions.

In addition to publication Dr. Lee has recently completed post-doctoral certification in the area of Psych-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner training at the University of Alabama to support increased service ability and precepting abilities to meet the overwhelming need for Psych-Mental Health Services in Georgia.

Dr. Lee has developed a Rural Health Preceptor Network in the past two years that has added 5 health systems and over 15 providers to the preceptor pool. All providers are in the Rural Market and cover both Primary Care and Psych Mental Health. Through some of the projects funded above Dr. Lee has secured tuition assistance for students, Opioid Management and Training Certification, Lodging Support and most recently increase IT infrastructure that will support students being able to have access to facilities' Electronic Health Systems as well as Wi-Fi support so that they can utilize their clinical time to their fullest while onsite. Success in the Rural Market has been evident by over 3,000 hours of clinical time being provided by healthcare professionals in the Rural Health Preceptor Network. Students have gotten real life, holistic experiences that have supported increased critical thinking and outreach skills to be able to meet the complex needs of

patients in the most rural areas of Georgia. The rural network facilities have not only welcomed the students into their clinical settings during Covid-19, but, also have supported the whole experience of rounding with their preceptors as appropriate so they could obtain the all-around experience they need to be successful.

In collaboration with Augusta University Dr. Lee has coordinated MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) training for over 20 healthcare providers in rural Georgia to address the Opioid Crisis. August 20, 2021 she will implement this education and training in the graduate program at Valdosta State University so that students can graduate with certification ability and a greater understanding of the role of both the primary care and behavioral health provider in the battle against opioid misuse, abuse and addiction.

Innovation:

Long before the pandemic Dr. Lee provided home visits to patients who struggled with transportation or mobility issues. During COVID Dr. Lee was able to be the eyes and ears for patients with complex needs for Specialty Providers through home visits and follow-ups without the need to travel during the shutdown. Through this process she supported providers who were less eager to implement telemedicine or telehealth services to incorporate them into their practices. For those that did not have a virtual platform or were not accustomed to utilizing virtual services she worked with them individually to create connections for them to be able to serve their patients and keep everyone as “socially distanced” and safe as possible.

Patients and families in need of hospice services who would have typically have transitioned into hospice facility type settings were supported to stay home. She and her staff partnered with Rural Hospice agencies to keep patients home, keep families educated and safe and supported with PPE and sanitization needs as needed to promote respect and quality end of life care in their homes.

Dr. Lee partnered with local Critical Access Hospitals to implement 24/7 covid screenings and treatment to support industry safety, early access to treatment and availability of antibody infusions for at-risk populations early in COVID diagnosis to improve outcomes and promote decreased hospitalizations for those that were in the “at-risk category”. Dr. Lee has taken call for the past 18 months seven days a week so that the needs of rural Georgians could be met and treatment and outcomes for urgent or weekend issues could be positive and addressed without unnecessary visits to local Emergency Rooms that were over ran with COVID patients.

Dr. Lee has partnered with Azalea Health EMR Services to build coding tools to track and capture data related to transportation, outreach activities, chronic care management, transportation services and social services outreach programs.

In 2010 Dr. Lee designed B.A.B.E.S. (Battling Against Breast Cancer Educating for Survival) a program for women in rural Georgia who needed Breast Cancer related services and screenings but could not obtain them due to

cost, access or lack of education for availability of services. She developed a t-shirt line and is currently on her 18th shirt. All are themed and have an acronym that supports education while the shirt is being worn to serve as both a reminder of the importance of breast health and education to encourage increased prevention measures. The proceeds from these shirts go to pay for mammograms for women who are uninsured and are not eligible for other public programs, to support transportation for women and their families battling breast cancer and provide supportive palliative needs like compression sleeves and adaptive clothing needs to support improved physical health and self-esteem as patients travel through the battle to fight breast cancer. During the pandemic she shared funding directly back to the Critical Access Hospitals themselves for service delivery to that they could meet the needs of their communities effectively and efficiently while battling COVID-19. She has helped over 500 women and their families through this project.

During the pandemic Dr. Lee has partnered with local pharmacies for patients to receive medications on weekends and alternate hours. For elderly patients and patients with COVID she and her family have delivered needed nutritional support aides and medications to families where the entire support system was in quarantine.

Communication:

Dr. Lee designed and provided a 6 module series for HomeTown Health University related to primary care, integrated health models and care for patients with behavioral health disorders in primary care. She has given multiple Webinar and Podium Presentations regarding her integrative

healthcare models and implementation processes for communities and health systems to utilize them.

Dr. Lee has expanded staffing in her collaborative center to meet the needs of the migrant population with Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacist services available in both English and Spanish.

Dr. Lee and her staff have taken the Covid vaccine into the community and hosted vaccine outreach services at alternate hours for shift workers. A migrant vaccine outreach program was also provided to roll out the vaccine to migrant workers at the work site to accommodate their working needs as well as comfort for receiving services in a familiar area. Antibody screenings were also performed for migrant workers to document previous exposure and attempt to capture more accurate immunity rates in at-risk populations. These services were all provided in English and Spanish with Dr. Lee utilizing her Spanish skills as well to support comfort in care in their native language during education and direct care services.

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.

Cultivates a vital, innovative rural health landscape and infrastructure. ,
Develops leadership capacity to grow rural population health and health equity. , 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.

Education/Training:



Dr. Lee's diverse educational background has supported her ability to provide direct care, leadership and community guidance and support to help "Grow a HealthIE Georgia". During the pandemic after battling COVID-19 herself she completed Psych-Mental Health Post-Doctoral Education to ensure she could meet the needs of complex patients, have the knowledge to design and implement collaborative care models and support expanded educational opportunities to grow healthcare providers in both the primary care and behavioral health areas.

University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa, AL, Post Master's PMHNP Certificate, January 2020 to August 2021

University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa, AL, Doctor of Nursing Practice, August 2010

Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, May 2007, Master of Science in Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner

Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, July 2003, Master of Science in Special Education with a focus in Learning Disabilities

Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA, August 2001, Bachelor of Science in Technical, Trade and Industrial Education

Grant Accomplishments:

(The COINS Model was utilized for each of these grant awards. HealthIE Georgia Corporation was the awardee or sub-awardee in each of these grants)

HRSA: Rural Community Opioid Response Program-2021 (Award July 2021)

The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) is a multi-year initiative by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) aimed at reducing the morbidity and mortality of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD), in high-risk rural communities. Award Amount: 1,000,000.00 (total for 3-year project)

HRSA: COVID-19 Workforce Implementation Grant (Award July 2021).

This funding will help community-based organizations to hire and mobilize community outreach workers, community health workers, social support specialists and others to conduct on-the-ground outreach to educate and assist individuals in getting the information they need about vaccination, help make vaccine appointments, and assist with transportation and other needs to get to individuals to each of their vaccination appointments. Award Amount: 1,000,000.00 (1 year)

HRSA: Rural Health Outreach Grant (Award March 2021).

The Outreach Program is a community-based grant program aimed towards promoting rural health care services by enhancing health care delivery to

rural underserved populations in the local community or region. Through consortia of local health care and social service providers and communities can develop innovative approaches to challenges related to the specific health needs in rural areas that expand clinical and service capacity in rural communities with a focus on people with disabilities and expansion of services for patients on the Autism Spectrum and their families. Award Amount: 800,000.00 (total for 4-year project)

SAMHSA: CCBHC: Certified Community Behavior Health Center
Implementation Grant-Partnership with

Pineland Community Service Board (Awarded February 2021)

The purpose of this program is to increase access to and improve the quality of community mental and substance use disorder treatment services through the expansion of CCBHCs. CCBHCs provide person- and family-centered integrated services. The CCBHC Expansion grant program must provide access to services including 24/7 crisis intervention services for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) or substance use disorders (SUD), including opioid use disorders; children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance (SED); and individuals with co-occurring mental and substance disorders (COD). SAMHSA expects that this program will provide comprehensive 24/7 access to community-based mental and substance use disorder services; treatment of co-occurring disorders; and physical healthcare in one single location. Award Amount: (4 million dollars over 2 years)



Professional Awards/Accomplishments:

"I caught you caring award", Valdosta State University, (April 2020)

Blazer Creed Award for Citizenship, Valdosta State University, (2019)

Named WTOC "Hometown Hero" October 2012 for B.A.B.E.S. Program Outreach

Named Appling County "Citizen of the Year" by the Appling County Chamber of Commerce, March 2013

Innovative Healthcare Delivery Model Design:

Designer of The COINS Model: Community Outreach Intervention Network Services. This is a collaborative model that provides primary care, behavioral health and pharmacy services all under one roof to support wrap around holistic care to improve compliance of treatment regimens, increase access and promote improved outcomes and quality of life)

Outreach/Scholarship:



Podium Presentation: Hometown Health, Spring Conference, Jekyll Island, GA. COINS: Community Outreach Intervention Network Services. Building a Rural Certified Community Behavior Health Center.

Webinar Presentation: Strategies to Prevent Unsafe Opioid Prescribing in Primary Care.

Hometown Health University as a partner of the Georgia State Office of Rural Health's Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP Program).

Webinar Presentation: (A Continuum of Integrated Care-Blending Behavioral Health and Primary

Care. Hometown Health University as a partner of the Georgia State Office of Rural Health's Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP Program).

Webinar Presentation: Care and Case Management of Individuals with Depression. Hometown

Health University as a partner of the Georgia State Office of Rural Health's Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP Program).

Webinar Presentation: Care and Case Management for Opioid Use Disorders. Hometown

Health University as a partner of the Georgia State Office of Rural Health's Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP Program).



Publication: Good Things come in all Shapes and Sizes: Meeting the Needs of People with

Disabilities in Rural Georgia. Iris J of Nur & Car. 2(3): 2019. IJNC.MS.ID.000535. DOI: 10.33552/IJNC.2019.02.000536.

Webinar Presentation: Identification and Screening for Opioid Use Disorder. Hometown

Health University as a partner of the Georgia State Office of Rural Health's Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP Program).

Publication: Implementing Rural Chronic Care Management: Bridging Gaps and Making a

Difference. Iris J of Nur & Car. 2(2): 2019. IJNC.MS.ID.000535. DOI: 10.33552/IJNC.2019.02.000535.

Podium Presentation: Georgia Rural Health Association, Jekyll Island, GA. Utilizing the NICKELS Health Model to Bridge Gaps in Rural Healthcare – Collaborating to meet the needs of Rural Georgians.

Podium Presentation: HealthIE Georgia, Rural Communities Opioid Response Workshop, Glenn Ella Springs, Georgia. Chronic Care Management and Behavioral Health Management: Tying it all Together.



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?

NOSORH

Have Questions? Contact:

powerofrural.org | nosorh.org | bcorsaro@powerofrural.org

