



August 16, 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

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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?

Role & Nature of Work:

As an employee of Estill County EMS my job is first as a paramedic which I started in 1998 working part time. After much thought I moved to a full-time position in 2000. Working in the community where not only I grow up, but my parents had owned a business there most of my life, was a very difficult decision.

Estill County is a small rural town in Kentucky where everyone knows you and you them. During the years of being on an ambulance I acquired every certification and instructor certification that was available. The more education and knowledge of my job I could get the more that I wanted. I truly enjoy taking care of my friends and family. It has its times of being very challenging because you do know everyone. You care for them not only with medicine but by tears, prayers, hugs, and a lot of emotions that make you wonder why you do this job. I have been able to stay in this job because there are also those days that you know and understand why you are doing this job.

I moved from being on an ambulance 24/48 hour rotation to an administrative position as training major that allowed me to do more on the community education side. This has also allowed me to work and teach with our local rural critical access hospital, (Mercy Health - Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital), health department, school system, church camps and



other community organizations. While working in our eastern Kentucky community we have accomplished a lot. I have been on multiple boards that has allowed me to give a view from EMS that most people know nothing about. There is involvement with agencies such as Kentucky Rural Health, Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky Public Health, Kentucky Board of EMS, American Heart Association, and many others. These opportunities have allowed me to visit surrounding counties to help with instruction for not only on medical treatment classes but education for programs they want to pursue.

Today along with a lot of work from everyone at ECEMS (Estill County EMS) we have become one of the top EMS providers in the state. We have proven with quality care, the most current technology, and community partnerships that we can do anything set before us. We have been the model for surrounding counties on Trauma, CPR and even today on OD (overdose) task force teams. That have been put in place based on data driven actions that have shown to improve our community and care for the citizens and visitors. We have worked hard to create the culture that understands we are small but with working together we can make a difference each day in the lives of others.

My role is not only to take care of my patients but also take care of our employees and our community. This includes doing everything possible to give us the best tools for our practice. Acquiring funding for those tools in today's world is not always easy while researching new and innovative practices. I must continue to show the public that we are not only caring and compassionate but that we have the highest trained EMT and Paramedics working at Estill County EMS. One of my most important roles is that I work with all agencies and foster the continued support and partnerships that have made us so successful thus far. Creating a climate for which we are

proud to say is one of the best in the state. Our local hospital and Ems have bar none the most respected relationship of anyone. Although it is not just me creating this environment it takes us all working together and that we do well.

What inspired you to choose your career?

How did I choose this career?

I feel for me there is not one thing I can pinpoint that caused me to choose this path for my career. It was multiple things through out my life that caused me to wind up not only in EMS but back in the community that I grew up in. When I was young, I always thought I would be a nurse because like most people I enjoyed being with and taking care of people. However, as I grew up, I decided to go down a totally different path and pursue a career in accounting. Accounting turned out to be very easy for me. I received my education and started working in the field I thought was for me. Several years later I found myself with a very young child and divorced along with being dissatisfied with my career. I needed something more in my life that would let me know that no matter how bad things were for me, I should be thankful because there were always those that had it worse than me. So..... on a fluke I went to EMT class. As I started playing in EMS and working shifts on the weekends when I didn't have my son. I realized this was something I really wanted to do. I loved the work and the more I learned the more I wanted to learn. I started out with my EMT, then a CPR instructor and then on to EMT instructor where I was teaching what I was learning. I started teaching to various organizations and places. I decided I wasn't satisfied with being a EMT and wanted a higher skill set, so the next step for me was a Paramedic class. Once I received my Paramedic license I accepted a job with Estill County EMS after a lot of thought, in the community that I knew most

everyone and they at known me since I was a child. I have learned a lot about myself through this journey. I now understand its ok to want more out of life and that working hard for it makes you appreciate it even more. I don't mind hard and stressful work when there is a need for a change. I know that being a type A personality is not always a gift. But I have learned to understand that I am a fixer even when it's the hardest job you may ever do. Including days when you must except somethings are not always in my control. My mind set is that with good people around me that are willing to work we can change or do anything. The most important thing I have learned is that when I go home at night, and I look back on my day I am able to say I have been able to educate or help the friends and family I so dearly love. That I think tells me I am doing what I was supposed to do with what I have been given. So..... all of that to say this, I chose this career not really understanding how much I would enjoy the path that had been placed before me, but that I would not change it in any way. I love the people I care for and love reaching out to others willing to learn something new. I know better than most it does take a village to raise a child because that village is my community of friends and family that have raised me!

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

Work impact on community and rural population

This is in my eyes the biggest accomplishment I have been a part of that has impacted our community. Being from a rural community where resources are limited you must become creative by cross training everyone along with getting them to buy in to a role that they didn't expect. Teaching in these areas can be challenging. It takes a strong standing while being confident to be respected and excepted. When I first came to work at Estill County EMS there was an only one doctor in the emergency room only part of the time. It



became extremely important that you were trained to handle whatever came your way. That is when I decided the more training, I could get the better off I was going to be. I knew I needed everything I could learn to be equipped to care for my patients. I also knew that I couldn't help the others around me if I was not prepared. At that point my husband and I set out to acquire instructor status to help educate not only ourselves but all those around us. We began teaching with the hospital staff and our employees. This not only created an environment of respect between the organizations but a knowledge that each knew best practice in caring for our friends and family. The administration of our small rural access hospital was instrumental in helping with this endeavor. They required all nursing staff to be certified in advance practices from American Heart. This allowed us to create a close net family of caregivers. These friendships we created will carry on for years to come. In a small community we all understand that if we are not working together, we will not accomplish the goals we expect.

Although I am involved in numerous organizations these are a few that I am most proud of:

Kentucky Office of Rural Health – the KORH selected my husband Jimmie Wise, Director of EMS and I as Rural Champions for an article that was included in the KORH “The Bridge” (Spring 2019), active on numerous boards that are in conjunction with KORH, Chaired the community for “Project Home” two different years, EMS representative for “Project HELP”, attended not only a “Grant writing education” sponsored by KORH but also a EMS Leadership training held in the western part of the state.

Eastern Kentucky University – Adjunct faculty member for Eastern Kentucky University Paramedic program, Department of Emergency Care. Serves on Advisory board for Paramedic Program

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Applied for and ran the “CARES Grant” with Preston Elrod, PhD School of Justice Studies on school safety for the Estill County High School. This included assessment, training in active shooter, reevaluation, and education, practices with the partners from multiple entities in the county and across the state.

School Violence-Active Shooter was particularly a concerned with the number of incidences of school violence occurring in our nation and specifically, in Kentucky. Nationally, there are school violence events occurring on daily basis, and in Kentucky, there has been three occurrences which resulted in deaths of teachers and students. To help address this, partnering with Eastern Kentucky University Department of Criminal Justice became a huge asset. After receiving the grant funding, it provided Active Shooter Training to the EMS, hospital, and school system. This grant involved significant collaboration with multiple agencies including local sheriff and police, State Police, school administration, teachers, students, hospital, and volunteers.

Estill County – Attended the first “Estill County Leadership” class, Given the “Estill County Captain” award, Active with the local “OD Task Force” including administering the data driven OD maps program, OD maps (overdose) is an international mapping program that shows drug overdoses as they have occurred helping us to understand and be ready for new and dangerous drugs giving us time to prepare for a surge. (See more about mapping below)

Kentucky State – A member or chair of Elder Abuse Council, Child Fatality, Kentucky Aids/Hep Coalition with Ky Dept of Public Health, Kentucky Board of EMS, New Vista



National – Instructor for Kentucky and National Registry for First Responder, EMT, EMT and Paramedic. Evaluator. These credentials allow her to evaluate or teach any Medical Care students.

Instructor for Advance Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advance Life Support (PALS), Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PTLS) and advanced EKG instructor.

Instructor for Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) Emergency Casualty Care. Tactical Emergency Casualty Care exists to develop and accelerate evidenced and best practiced-based guidance for medical response and medical treatment of the injured during high risk and atypical civilian operational scenarios.

Instructor for Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) Tactical Combat Casualty Care, TCCC is developed by the U.S. Department of Defense Health Agency (DHA) Joint Trauma System to teach evidence-based, life-saving techniques and strategies for providing the best trauma care on the battlefield

Partnering with other eastern Kentucky counties on BLS/AED (Basic Life Support & Automatic External Deliberator) and Narcan substance abuse training sponsored by a grant thru New Vista and Marcum & Wallace Memorial (Mercy Health)

Certified Handtevy instructor. Handtevy is a pediatric resuscitation system that focuses on medication dosing during a crisis for pediatric patient.

Handtevy- Treating the emergent pediatric patient is difficult, especially in rural settings where the volumes of emergent pediatrics are low and the emotions are high, which creates an environment for medication errors along with emotional stress for the responders. To reduce this, the Handtevy Pediatric System is a system designed to give clinical teams rapid access to

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lifesaving dosing, equipment and drip information while documenting every critical action care. Customized dosing and equipment information is pushed to a mobile platform. The Handtevy system ensures that pediatric patients are receiving the correct dose of medication and greatly reduces the chances of medication error or overdose. With the Handtevy system it creates an environment that responders are accustomed to doing every day. Creating less stress during and after the call. After implementing Handtevy within the EMS, EMS partnered with the hospital ED as they too implemented a part of the Handtevy system. The result, reduction of errors and better-quality care and improved outcomes. After being introduced to this system at a conference I began to research not only the data driven system but ways of funding this system for our rural EMS service.

Bundle of Care – heart disease is prevalent in our rural communities and cardiac arrests are common. The Elegard is an evidence-based technique for performing device assisted head up CPR. The Elevated CPR method is a technologically advanced technique for performing device-assisted head up CPR that incorporates raising the head, heart, and thorax in a multi-level elevation, in a timed sequence, in conjunction with best practice resuscitation protocols. The Elevated CPR may potentially offer a significant opportunity to improve the chances for neurologically intact survival of cardiac arrest when implemented with the proper bundle of devices. ECEMS is the only Kentucky EMS service that has incorporated the Elegard system into their protocols. However, this system is becoming the standard of care and other communities are moving toward implementing this technology. There were many barriers to implementation of these two cutting edge initiatives. After receiving the education and data for initiatives, the most important job was obtaining the necessary funding by working with our EMS Board and other public agencies to obtain support for the purchase of the equipment. Research and funding for a “bundle of care” known as CPR, Elegard heads up



device, Lucas device includes creating a high performance pit crew to administer data driven outcomes to our patients. This research driven care shows increased cerebral quality in survivors of cardiac arrest.

Level IV Trauma System – Created training for both hospital and EMS to help Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital become the first level IV Trauma Center in the state. This was not only the training that was important but the collaboration between several agencies within the community. Trauma training continues for recertification evaluations.

American Health Association Mission: Lifeline program. According to the American Heart Association “The Mission: Lifeline EMS recognition is a program designed to showcase Emergency Medical Service organizations across the nation for excellent STEMI care. Prehospital personnel are the first providers of care to patients suffering from cardiac emergencies. The role of EMS in the system-of-care for these patients is crucial and often sets the course for the patient's outcome. Mission: Lifeline connects EMS providers, referring (non-PCI) hospitals and receiving (PCI-capable) centers in a coordinated system of care. The program also assists EMS agencies in getting the feedback needed to understand how the system of care is working and provides evidence-based metrics to measure the system's performance”. ECEMS has received first the bronze level of recognition, and now achieved the Silver Level of the Mission: Lifeline EMS Quality Achievement Award. Achieving Silver Status indicate that the EMS had aggregated annual compliance ($\geq 75\%$) on applicable Mission: Lifeline EMS Measures. As a rural EMS, the highest level that can be achieved is Silver status. In 2018, only 497 prehospital agencies in the US, including 15 in Kentucky received the Mission: Lifeline EMS Quality Achievement Award. This was a great achievement for our rural EMS as there are 240 EMS services in Kentucky.

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- Overdose (OD) Task Force Drug overdose is a significant problem in our community. According to a 2019 report produced by the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Branch, Estill County had the highest overdose death rate in Kentucky (based on the population adjusted per 100,000 inhabitants) with 13 deaths that were attributed to illicit or prescription drugs, and the trend continues for 2021. To help understand and then reduce the number of occurrences, our community organized an OD task force which includes OD mapping. This is a collaborative effort which involves a committee of community members to include key hospital staff, EMS, Sheriff, Justice Department, County Judge Executive, Behavioral health, and County Attorney. One goal of the committee is to implement OD mapping, a national data tool to track overdoses. "ODMAP provides near real-time suspected overdose surveillance data across jurisdictions to support public safety and public health efforts to mobilize an immediate response to a sudden increase, or spike in overdose events. It links first responders and relevant record management systems to a mapping tool to track overdoses to stimulate real-time response and strategic analysis across jurisdictions". With real time data the community responders can implement strategic interventions for prevention of drug overdose and mitigate deaths when data indicates a trend of upcoming overdoses, tracks flow of drugs and overdoses. While being a member of the OD task force and responsible for gathering and entering our community data related to OD deaths into the OD: mapping system. I serve as Medical Liaison for the Estill County Coroner Office and Opioid Crisis for First Responders. I have worked with ASAP (Agency for Substance Abuse) to obtain grant funding to help support the purchase of Narcan for the local EMS services. While not only active in providing community education to anyone interested in learning about Narcan I travel to other communities in our region for education for their citizens.



I understand that I may have been the driving force for some of these projects, but I am only a small part in a larger picture to help push forward quality care for our friends and family in small communities. All these accomplishments show how dedicated we all are in seeing that we have the best quality care no matter our size. I have been asked to come into other communities to help set their same goals into place. It is all about seeing a need and working for it and over coming any barriers that are placed in front of you. It does not happen over night but takes everyone working together. Being an educator is so exciting when you see these accomplishments. These things have made an impact on our community that is not seen in rural America. We have tried to exceed care to help our friends and families live longer and healthier lives.

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

Estill County Emergency Medical Service responds to approximately 4500, 911 calls and medical transfers in Estill County per year. We have always prided ourselves in being on the cutting edge of quality care for our community. Estill County EMS has been involved with several organizations through out the state including Kentucky Rural Health. We know without their support we would not be where we are today.

Thanks to KORH Estill County EMS has been able to attend several educational events on leadership and grant writing that their representatives helped initiate. Our regional office has been great to work with. Shelia Wise, NREMT and Training Major, has worked with Kentucky Rural Health on several boards including Project Home where she was Chair during 2018 & 2020. Partnering with other state and community leaders to further educate

13



and improve health in rural areas throughout the state have always been important to our community and our outreach families. Estill County EMS has worked with Marcum & Wallace on multiple endeavors that benefit our residents and surrounding counties. It goes without saying that we feel our relationship with KORH, and other state agencies have been a huge benefit to all involved. We have been able to achieve our goals thanks to their help.

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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