August 18, 2021

Thank you for completing your organization's 2021 Community Star Nominee Questionnaire!

Overview

Here is a copy of your organization's responses 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 Organization's Information

Island Health Inc. and Island Health Care Community Health Center
Cynthia Mitchell
CEO
Edgartown, Massachusetts
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Organization or Project Website

https://www.ihimv.org

Please describe in as much detail as possible, the mission of the organization and the work it does in relation to rural health?

To provide access to high quality, affordable health care and enabling services for the residents of Dukes County, primarily the medically underserved, uninsured and underinsured. Working in partnership with other health care organizations, agencies, associations and community groups, Island Health Inc. commits to:

1.) Operate and sustain Island Health Care Community Health Center as a Federally Qualified Community Health Center under Section 330(e) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C § 254b).

2.) Connect Island residents with affordable health insurance.

3.) Report periodically to the community as well as to regional, state and federal policymakers on the effectiveness of the health center's services, programs, and community initiatives.

4.) Develop and maintain an overall plan for the support and coordination of care for members of the community.

5.) Incorporate prevention, wellness and self-management information and programs as part of the health center's plan for delivery of care.

6.) Conduct and provide ongoing community health assessment, planning and leadership.

7.) Sponsor and provide additional health care services as the Board of Directors deems appropriate and necessary.

If you have been nominated as a consortium, what was the catalyst that inspired the group to form?

N/A

Please provide details on each consortium member (if applicable) including each collaborator's organization and the nature of their work?

N/A

What is the impact of your organization/consortium on your community of the rural populations served by its efforts?

Island Health, Inc. (IHI) operates Island Health Care (IHC) Federally-Qualified Community Health Center (awarded 11/1/2013) on Martha's Vineyard Island off the southern coast of Massachusetts. Before its FQHC status, IHC operated since 2004 as Massachusetts' first and only Rural Health Clinic. IHI is a community-based, independent non-profit organization founded in 2002 by a consortium of providers and consumers in response to the health care needs of the large numbers of uninsured and underserved residents of Dukes County, MA. IHC is committed to access for all in our community within an integrated, collaborative system of care and presently serves close to 4,000 residents and visitors in the service area.

Our target population includes underserved and uninsured residents of Dukes County (total population 17,137) – of which 10% are Brazilian immigrants, 1.7% are Native American, 24% are 65 yrs old) adults. Dukes County is a rural county consisting of Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth

Islands, where three regional characteristics converge: low socio-economic status reflective of a lack of quality employment for specific subgroups; limited English-proficiency and health literacy among the immigrant population; and chronically limited access to health care resulting from the economics and rural geography of the service area. The Island is only reachable by ferry, private boat and limited air service.

Major health needs and barriers for the medically underserved relate to extreme and chronic health care professional shortages and affordability of care. (Dukes County has both a primary care HPSA and MUP designation.) For the target group, there is limited or no access to oral health services, and limited or no access to mental health services. High rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus and related chronic conditions prevail, particularly among the immigrant population. Substance Use Disorders have long plagued members of our community.

At our single site on Martha's Vineyard, a clinical staff of 5 primary care providers and 7 clinical support positions, with 23 patient support, management, administrative and enabling services staff, deliver on-site, through contract or by referral family medicine, family planning, women's health, behavioral health and substance use disorder services, oral health, medical specialty referrals, chronic disease management, laboratory and other ancillary services, immunizations, and enabling services. Additionally, our scope of service includes outreach, health education and promotion, enrollment in public health insurance, as well as transportation and prescription assistance.

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Has your organization or consortium accessed, benefited from, or worked directly with your State Office of Rural Health?

Yes, MA Office of Rural Health has been advocated and facilitated assistance from state agencies to include our former rural health clinic (now a federally-qualified health center) in enhanced reimbursement opportunities offered to health centers.

Is your organization a HRSA, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Grantee? If yes, which grant program? If Yes, which one?

Yes
Small Rural Health Quality Grant, Rural Health Outreach Grant