

2022 Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month: April

Ms. Melissa Wyaco has been with Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS) since September of 2021 as the Area Nurse Consultant. The NAIHS delivers health services to a user population of over 244,000 American Indians/Alaska Natives in five Federal service units on and near the Navajo Nation, which is one of the largest Indian reservations.

Ms. Wyaco has demonstrated exceptional performance in this short period of time; she takes it upon herself to provide exceptional support and service to the Navajo Area nursing leadership and staff. She quickly discerns their individual Service Unit needs and moves efficiently to provide key information, recommendations, or direction. She conducted five (5) nursing program reviews where she identified accomplishments, needs, and resources to determine how best to assist each of the Chief Nurse Executives. She has been instrumental in working with the NAIHS Acquisition department to streamline contract processes for new nursing hires to improve staffing shortages when there is no permanent nursing staff available for both Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) and Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC). As a nurse leader, Ms. Wyaco has assisted as staff nurse at Covid-19 vaccination clinics and car-based testing at Shiprock, Tohatchi Health Center, and GIMC. She is coordinating and collaborating with nursing programs in New Mexico and Arizona along with other universities to arrange clinical rotation for the nursing students.

As a member of the NAIHS Quality Management Team, Ms. Wyaco's expertise in Patient Centered Medical Home (PMCH) is key to achieving Joint Commission Certification for Crownpoint, Gallup Indian Medical Center and Kayenta Service Units. During the mock surveys, she was extremely helpful to the Service Unit PCMH team by providing toolkits in preparation for the Joint Commission survey. She also participates in a site review at the Native Americans for Community Action (NACA) Urban Health Care Center in Flagstaff, AZ, to ensure the facility is in compliance in delivering health care services. She promotes patient safety culture in initiating a structured method for optimizing teamwork processes, such as communication, cooperation, collaboration, and leadership to improve patient care delivery.

Ms. Wyaco provides exceptional support to the Navajo leadership team and strives to inspire us with her dedication and positive energy.