

2023 Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month: July

The Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month for July 2023 is CAPT Vickie Caldwell from the [Wewoka Indian Health Center](#) in the IHS [Oklahoma City Area](#). She has served as the Chief Nurse Executive (CNE) at the Wewoka Indian Health Clinic (WIHC) for the past 2 years and manages four departments: Nursing, Public Health Nursing (PHN), Infection Prevention (IP) and Employee Health (EH). These departments are staffed by 12 RNs, 9 LPNs, and 2 MSAs (including 4 Commissioned Officers).

CAPT Caldwell assumed the CNE position in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. She was a driving force in the COVID-19 efforts at WIHC and has steadily made improvements in her departments. These innovative changes have resulted in increased access to care, improved patient flow, increased GPRA measures, positive feedback from staff, decreased no-show rates, increased preventive health care, and increased staff productivity. She is a positive example for the staff, always professional, sympathetic, empathetic, unbiased, and supportive. Prior to CAPT Caldwell, the staff lacked the confidence to make decisions within their scope of practice. She has demonstrated confidence in them, ensured they are competent, well trained, confident, and free to perform at the top of their individual licensure. This culture change has resulted in increased morale and productivity, and independent decision-making, affecting the quality of care given to patients.

Her responsibilities include management and oversight of four departments, facility Executive Leadership Team membership, PI Project Champion for the facility no-show project, functioning as CEO as needed, member of the survey readiness, E3 team, and HIV PrEP teams, leader for Safe Narcotic Return and Social Determinants of Health, COVID-19 Coordinator, and Oklahoma Area Nurse Leadership Council member.

Some of the accomplishments that warrant her recognition for the Nurse of the Month include: (1) presentation of staffing proposals approved by the CEO resulting in 4 additional FTE's (3 MSA's, 1 RN Care manager, and 1 Supervisory Clinical Nurse.) These additional staff increased flow, productivity, and prompt customer service for patients navigating the referral process, as well as increasing patient flow, preventative screenings, immunizations, and leadership in the patient care clinics to facilitate the agency's strategic goals; (2) served as PI Champion for facility No-Show Project. (3) identified staff "champions" to increase screening rates for mammography, colorectal cancer, cervical cancer, diabetic foot exams, and increase immunization rates giving the nurses ownership of projects to prevent disease and aid in early detection (4) the following GPRA measures increased during the 2022 GPRA year under CAPT Caldwell's leadership: Cervical (Pap) Screen, Mammogram Screen, Alcohol Screen, IPV/DV Screen, Depression Screen (12-17), Depression Screen (18+), HIV Screen, and Adult Composite Immunization Screen. She has also led initiatives to increase diabetic foot exams, and most recently syphilis screening.

CAPT Caldwell has been a mentor to many, allowing us to glean from her experience, character, wisdom, and grace under pressure as she leads our team to positive outcomes and patient success here at Wewoka Indian Health Center. She is a gem in the nursing world and a treasure for the Native American and Alaskan Native population that she proudly serves day in and day out. We proudly nominate CAPT Vickie Caldwell for Nurse of the Month for her dedicated service at WIHC that focuses on leading by example, building a strong and confident nursing team, putting the patient at the forefront of initiatives, and accomplishing the mission of the Agency.