

2021 Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month

Nominee: Melissa Hubbard, DNP. Billings Area IHS Director of Quality

I am honored to nominate Dr. Hubbard as the nurse of the month for her exemplary efforts to detect, prevent, treat and manage resources during the Covid-19 Pandemic while maintaining her primary duties as Director of Quality.

Dr. Hubbard is a COVID-19 Pandemic Hero in the Billings Area IHS. Since March 2020, she has taken on numerous assignments and has held an active role on the Billings Area incident command team as the Liaison Officer. This includes coordinating daily, weekly, bi-weekly and monthly communication calls with multiple stakeholders across Montana and Wyoming. She has reliably aggregated copious sources of Covid-19 daily testing results, which includes working with our 14 IHS/Tribal/Urban sites to report data and procure life-saving Personal Protective Equipment. As the pandemic surges in Montana and Wyoming expanded, so did Dr. Hubbard's organization skills and capacity to always stay ahead of the hectic pace.

Dr. Hubbard has provided continuous medical technical assistance to our stakeholders, which includes attending external recurring calls with entities such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Her nursing expertise was invaluable and timely during the surge of COVID-19 cases and helped alleviate anxiety during uncharted times. She has invaluable previous nursing experience working with Ebola patients that was extremely helpful when working with our COVID-19 patients. She has also helped fulfill duties of the Area Nurse Executive, which has been vacant for over 2 years.

Dr. Hubbard has provided "boots on the ground" technical assistance to the Public Health Nursing programs in Lame Deer and Fort Belknap, Montana. At Northern Cheyenne, during a critical period of accelerating positive Covid-19 cases, she assisted the Tribal Health Department, CDC and IHS personnel at the Tribe and service unit by coordinating and implementing an action plan for the community. These rapid efforts saved lives in the Northern Cheyenne community. At the Fort Belknap Indian community, she was instrumental in providing guidance and technical assistance by utilizing FEMA donated traveling trailers for a community surveillance pilot that was designed and executed, and continues to test in the community today. This project included testing community members at targeted locations throughout the Fort Belknap Reservation. Because of these efforts, several community clusters were identified early and mitigated timely. Absent this project, the positive cases would have spread further into the community before detection.

Lastly, Dr. Hubbard continues to lead the Billings Area in revamping the Governing Board process, sustaining accreditation readiness and working with multiple service units to improve the credentialing and privileging process. The Joint Commission accreditation and continuous readiness is an ultimate goal for all seven of our IHS facilities, including our newest, the Little Shell Service Unit. She has also assisted in a variety of ways for the Little Shell Service Unit to become operational.

Ms. Hubbard is a tremendous asset to the Billings Area IHS, including the Incident Command team, pandemic response, and the Quality Department. Her tireless efforts are well deserving of this recognition and again I am proud to nominate Ms. Melissa Hubbard as the Nurse of the Month.