

2021 Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month

Nominee: Ms. Dorothea Begaye, Supervisor Clinical Nurse, Tsaile Health Center

I am honored to nominate Ms. Begaye as the nurse of the month for her exemplary efforts to promote a positive work environment and manage resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic while maintaining her primary duties as Supervisory Clinical Nurse (SCN).

Ms. Begaye has been an enthusiastic nurse leader at the Tsaile Health facility as the SCN for the past 6 years. Tsaile is a small outpatient facility which serves multiple communities and maintains a satellite clinic at Rock Point, Arizona on Tuesdays, accounting for an overall average servicing of 9,500 American Indian/Alaska Native people per year. Ms. Begaye is invaluable in performing direct patient care and administrative services in her nursing capacity. For example, her efforts are emphasized in the coordination of the flu and COVID-19 community vaccination pods and participating in the administration of vaccinations, patient registration or any other activities she can perform to “lead by example as a team player” at these events. The effective team work is a result of Ms. Begaye’s leadership as a leader with vision, inspiration and hard work. She is always setting the example, leading the Outpatient Department with her verbal, organizational and interpersonal communication skills.

Since 2020, Ms. Begaye has taken on numerous assignments and has held an active role as the Incident Command (IC) team lead during the pandemic. This includes coordinating daily, weekly, bi-weekly and monthly communication calls with multiple stakeholders across the Chinle Service Unit and Navajo Nation. In this role she coordinates and oversees the COVID-19 response for the Tsaile catchment area. Ms. Begaye successfully implemented a plan to provide patient service clinics external to the hospital which centered on making health care accessible for patients to be seen in their vehicles, to be ‘seen’ by a telehealth provider or to be allowed in the facility (in limited numbers) for regular provider visits. Ms. Begaye’s ability to “think outside of the box” to achieve the high performance in support of the IHS mission to provide health care demonstrates her initiative and creative coordination, which she headed up flawlessly.

Ms. Begaye flourished under this added responsibility and led the Tsaile facility to offer, almost exclusively, outdoor services and clinics during the height of the pandemic and to reopen the facility as COVID-19 restrictions lessened. As the IC Lead, she successfully managed the activity to allow patients back into the facility as pandemic precautions allowed, ensuring patient safety and maximizing patient care, and reopening the Pediatric and Women’s Health clinics to allow patients in-house as soon as it was safe to do so to provide critically needed care to these patient populations.

Ms. Begaye is the facility’s BLS instructor and the president of the Tsaile Employee Association. In addition to her RN licensure she has a Master’s Degree in Healthcare Administration and a Master of Science in Nursing, and plans to continue to work toward a nurse practitioner degree and doctorate degree when the pandemic has ended.

Ms. Begaye serves as acting Tsaile Health System Administrator and I have utilized her in this capacity on many occasions. Ms. Begaye is a tremendous asset to the Tsaile Health Center, including the Incident Command team, pandemic response, and the Nursing team. Her tireless efforts are well deserving of this recognition and again I am proud to nominate Ms. Dorothea Begaye as the Nurse of the Month.