

## **2021 Division of Nursing Services Nurse of the Month Lieutenant Steven Owens**

Lieutenant (LT) Steven Owens is nominated for the Nurse of the Month program for July, 2021 because of his many contributions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. LT Owens is a Staff Development Coordinator in the Quality Management Department at Whiteriver Service Unit, Arizona, in a medium to large hospital with 580 staff that serves the 18,000 members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. In this position he is responsible for training staff as a certified American Heart Association (AHA) instructor in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Basic Life Support (BLS), and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS). Additionally, he is responsible for ensuring newly hired staff are provided with Joint Commission required trainings. These are just two contributions LT Owens was able to sustain during the pandemic while contributing much more.

In March of 2020, LT Owens returned to his permanent duty station and was assigned as the Deputy Operations Sections Chief because of previous deployment experience. In this role he worked 12-14 hours a day from March to June with 20-30 direct reports. He was responsible to ensure that laboratory specimens were transported to remote laboratories for processing, that patient screening stations were staffed, and direct patient care units were staffed – including a 13 bed detached medical treatment structure. The Operations Section stood down on June 30, 2021, and by that time over 20,000 specimens were collected with over 4,000 positive COVID results.

LT Owens provided direct patient care to patients positive with COVID-19 on both the inpatient ward and emergency department during extreme staffing shortages. He performed approximately 100 hours of COVID-19 swabbing. He was a key planning member for the first drive-through community vaccine event where close to 700 community members were immunized with the COVID-19 vaccine. An additional 15-18 community vaccine events were coordinated under his watch. Today, over 70% of the high-risk population is protected because they received their COVID-19 vaccination.

During LT Owens' time as Deputy Operations Chief he developed a virtual orientation process for new hires, adhering to CDC's recommendations for social distancing and group gathering restrictions. He is also responsible for acquiring a portable AHA training station where staff members were able to complete online instruction in ACLS, BLS, and PALS. After the online training component was complete, staff members coordinated an in-person time for LT Owens to provide direct observation of hands-on skills for final certification. In total, this hybrid method ensured that approximately 30 staff (registered nurses, medical providers, pharmacists, and health technicians) maintained required certification.

LT Owens took on the additional role of the Acting Assistant Nurse Executive (AANE) in the later part of 2020 into May of 2021. Nursing is the largest group of direct reports in the services unit and LT Owens provided consultation, guidance, and mentorship daily. This within itself says a lot about LT Owens character and contributions as a junior officer serving in a senior leadership capacity. As AANE he was responsible to for staffing, staff mediation, and professional reports.

LT Owens demonstrated dedicated to service, the community he serves, and people he calls "work family" in ways that a simple thank you will not suffice. For this reason and the contributions listed above LT Owens is nominated for Nurse of the Month.