



2014 RURAL HERO OF THE YEAR

The Oregon Office of Rural Health is proud to present this year's Rural Health Hero of the Year Award to **Sandra Dunbrasky, MD**. Following are submission excerpts from those who supported the nomination.

EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Dunbrasky is an exceptional pediatrician, dedicated to rural practice and tireless advocate for the care of children and families in rural Oregon. In addition to her busy practice, she is Chief of the Pediatric Department of the hospital and directs a grant for abused children. She is an amazing teacher of neonatal resuscitation and conference speaker on rural health and is on the faculty at OHSU as an award-winning clinical preceptor.

“ABOVE AND BEYOND”

Dr. Dunbrasky has served on the Static Emergency Medical Services for Children Committee and reaches out to care for children and families in the wake of disasters throughout the United States and territories on the Oregon Disaster Medical Assistance (DMAT) Team on which she has served since 2004. She brings back lessons learned and the experience to enhance disaster and emergency care and recovery readiness to her community.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Dr. Dunbrasky developed a sustained clinic where infants and children receive the highest level of pediatric healthcare available in Eastern Oregon in a warm, caring environment. She has successfully advocated for and implemented programs for abused children and emergency care for ill infants, children and adolescents. As a woman, a physician, and a citizen, she has steadfastly worked for the past 20 years to build resources for her community in regard to well-child care, pediatric mental healthcare and acute illness care.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

I have been a Registered Respiratory Therapist at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Ontario, Oregon for 26 years. For the past 20 years, I have had the privilege and honor of working with Sandy Dunbrasky. Sandy is by far the most selfless, caring person I know. She truly loves giving her undivided attention to her pediatric patients and their families. At the bedside, she never fails to take extra time to sit and visit with patients and their families to explain in detail what is going on and what is to be expected. Every patient is the most critical patient in her eyes and this never waivers. Not only does she give her undivided attention to her patients, she continually mentors and educates fellow physicians, nurses, RT's and phlebotomists. She has an endless knowledge base and is always willing to share it with all staff. Sandy is an intricate piece in the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) here at SAMC-O, she is the physician for the didactic part of the training. She

pays close attention to every participant and works with them individually to help them understand and be confident with NRP. When we do have very critical infants, the staff is grateful to have her as a teacher and often refer to the NRP class and what Sandy taught them. She definitely makes a positive impression for new and inexperienced staff, we are lucky she is a part of our team.

For the past six years, Sandy has been a volunteer keynote speaker and facilitator for "Breathe Easy-Not Wheezy", a children's asthma workshop which takes place here at our facility. She speaks directly to the parents of children suffering with asthma. Not only does she educate them on the disease process, she talks to them about signs, symptoms, medications, and action plans.

Outside the hospital setting, I have also had the opportunity to witness Sandy in action as a fellow volunteer member of the Oregon Medical Disaster Team. Aside from training, we deployed to New York City in the wake of Superstorm Sandy for a two week medical mission. Although her specialty is pediatrics, she spent sleepless days and nights caring for victims of all ages and all ends of the medical spectrum. She also deployed for Hurricane Katrina, America Samoa earthquake, Hurricane Ivan, and Rita just to name a few. On many occasions she speaks of these experiences and it is obvious how much she loves to help others in need no matter the circumstance.

Sandy is also very passionate about being an advocate for children who are victims of abuse. She is recognized and highly commended in our community as a voice for the children of such tragedies. Since 1998, she has been the Clinical Evaluator for the Sexual Trauma Abuse Response center here in Ontario.

Not only does she illuminate the halls of the hospital with her compassion for patients, she also shares her love with her husband, children, grandchildren and her dogs. I personally do not know how she does everything that she does, but it is obvious she loves every minute of it.

These are just a few examples of how she goes above and beyond her call of duty. We are very fortunate to have Sandy Dunbrasky return from medical school to her home community as a physician, advocate, educator, volunteer and leader in our community. Sandy is a hero, in fact a Super Hero (I've seen her cape) not only in our rural community, but literally coast to coast.

I have known and worked with Dr. Dunbrasky for over 17 years in her rural pediatric clinic. She has served as a pediatrician in Ontario, Oregon for greater than 20 years. During my tenure in her clinic, I have always been most impressed by her willingness to care for any child regardless of ability to pay. Furthermore, I have witnessed many times where she personally paid for needed medicine. Her clinic has a policy that no child is turned away and we are to provide exceptional pediatric care to all who enter our clinic. She will not tolerate anything less.

Sandy has trained countless students over the years, me included, and has instilled in most the need for rural service and that the rewards far outweigh the inconveniences. With limited local specialty support, she has taught us to care for our more complex patients via telephone consult. From a patient's perspective, this is proof of her absolute commitment to provide "big city" care in a small town. Most patients would argue that this is far better care.

Dr. Dunbrasky further extends her skills and services by volunteering for medical missions during natural disasters. She is active in the local Community Connection Network which establishes care coordination for at-risk children. Sandy also serves as the medical director for the local abuse center for children. In summary, you could not have selected a better candidate who embodies what a rural health care provider should try to be.

**CONGRATULATIONS, DR. DUNBRASKY, AND THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU
HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO!**