

2017 RURAL HEALTH HERO OF THE YEAR



The staff of One Community Health September 2017

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

EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Lynne has worked tirelessly over the last nearly four years to take One Community Health (a Federally Qualified Health Center in the Columbia Gorge) to the zenith of patient care. She has accomplished this by incorporating evidence-based policies, procedures, and protocols into the daily operations of the clinic in order to give patients at this rural health center the same standard of care they would receive at a clinic in a large city or a clinic that does not primarily serve people below the federal poverty line. In addition to this, Lynne has advocated for the creation of a Population Health Team designed to specifically identify patients who have gaps in their preventive care and coordinate with the care teams of those patients to facilitate filling those gaps. The longest running program for this team she created is Colon Cancer Screening, which has been rated by the Journal of the American Medical Association as being tied for second place as the most effective preventive health screening in terms of quality years of life added. Typically, there is a racial discrepancy in such testing, resulting in insured Hispanic people being screened at about a 10% lower rate than non-Hispanic insured white people and uninsured Hispanic people being screened at a rate of about 18% lower than non-Hispanic white people. As of the beginning of June 2017, our reporting showed that in the six months this program had been operating, these racial inequalities were completely erased and all patients were screened at roughly the same rate!

This means that, as a direct result of Lynne's work, we as a health center have succeeded in making the Columbia Gorge a more just place for all who live here. Routine colon cancer screening means early identification of cancer and highly successful treatment, which in turn translates to more birthdays celebrated, more sunsets appreciated, and more moments shared with family and friends. Our patients have Lynne along with their care teams to thank for this.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Lynne is incredibly dedicated to her staff and patients, balancing administrative responsibilities with patient care. Yet, despite all of the things on her plate, Lynne always takes time to help her staff of over 75 direct and indirect reports to develop professionally and receive continued training. As a result of Lynne's advocacy, employees at One Community Health are given a training budget to use on training they deem useful each year. She invests in her staff and it shows. Moreover, Lynne ensures that her staff are able to accomplish a good work-life balance and insists that they engage in self-care. Not only does this show her regard for all people, it also builds capacitation within teams that in turn allows excellent patient care to take place.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Lynne's impact on our community has been myriad. One Community Health serves more than half of the Medicaid patients in the Columbia Gorge, in addition to hundreds of migrant seasonal farmworkers who travel here to pick fruit every year. Through the evidence based protocols, policies, and procedures that Lynne has incorporated, the 10,000+ patients served annually are given quality, evidence-based, whole- person care regardless of their racial, social, financial, or educational status. This truly speaks to the heart of both Lynne's guiding principles as well as the core values of One Community Health.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Public health research tells us that the most effective way in which to affect long term change is to focus on the next generation. Perhaps because of her start in pediatrics, Lynne has embraced this philosophy as well. Lynne has been instrumental in bringing a school-based health center (SBHC) to Hood River Valley High School. The SBHC serves all students in Hood River County and offers services ranging from acute needs to well care to mental health care. The SBHC routinely offers messaging and counseling to students on a variety of topics such as sexual health, substance abuse, bullying, and healthy lifestyles. Additionally, the SBHC prescribes contraception and administers long acting contraception. This has a significant impact in the long run because it curtails teenage pregnancy and creates opportunities for continuing education and growth for students. Traditionally, there is a socioeconomic and cultural element to teen pregnancy which can contribute to a generational cycle of poverty and missed opportunities. By giving the students tools to break this cycle, these students are given the opportunity to rise above and succeed.

In addition to universally accessible medical care, the mental health care offered at the SBHC is given regardless of ability to pay. This gives children who are experiencing depression, anxiety, bullying, family dysfunction, and abuse an opportunity to have a safe haven to talk about their problems and receive whole person care and referrals to other social services as appropriate. Evidence shows that early interventions for students struggling with these issues has exponential results for the rest of their lives.

Lynne's legacy will live on through generations in the health outcomes she has positively impacted.

**CONGRATULATIONS, LYNNE FROST, AND THANK YOU
FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO!**