



Idaho Rural Health Association
Idaho Rural Health Heroes

Awards Celebration

November 19, 2020

5:30 - 7:00 PM

ZOOM meeting

Anywhere, Idaho



National Rural Health Day



Governor Brad Little has proclaimed November 19, 2020 to be National Rural Health Day in Idaho.

To celebrate, the Idaho Rural Health Association honors rural people, providers, advocates and communities across Idaho. Nominations for the annual Idaho Rural Health Heroes Awards point to examples of service and dedication to those who call rural Idaho home.

This year's nominations came from all corners of Idaho, representing the rich variety of programs and people who work in rural health care. This awards booklet introduces the 2020 Idaho Rural Health Heroes - please join us in celebrating their achievements.

The Idaho Rural Health Association is a nonprofit membership organization that provides a voice on rural health issues through advocacy, communication, education and collaboration. It offers a forum for health professionals, community members and healthcare organizations to work together to identify and find solutions to rural health problems.



Clearwater Medical Clinic Staff, Lewiston

The Clearwater Medical Clinic staff is focused on providing quality primary care to their rural patients. Committed to learning new best practices, a dozen staff members have cumulatively earned 287 CME credits through ECHO Idaho's professional development program since 2018.

Two staff members have attended MAT Waiver Training and others engage with specialists around the state for feedback on difficult patient cases. As a result, the clinic's rural patients get high-quality health care with leaving their home community.

"Rural health faces many challenges, including the opioid epidemic and availability of behavioral health services. This in turn presents opportunities for collaboration with other healthcare professionals across the state." - Jill Ball

*"Being part of an interprofessional team that supports rural healthcare providers throughout the state is exciting. It's a chance to enhance the care provided to patients by sharing current best practices."
- Cathy Oliphant*

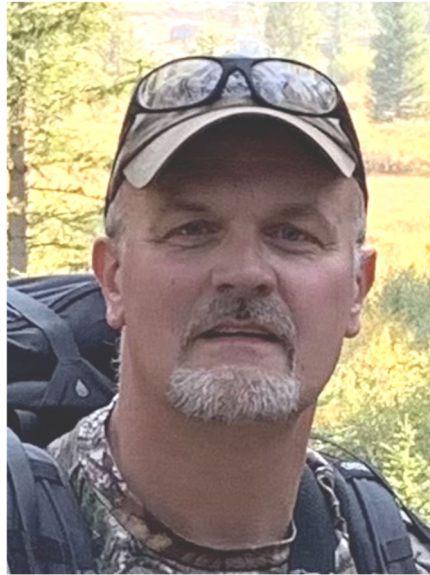


Cathy Oliphant, Idaho State University

Cathy Oliphant, PharmD, is an infectious disease/microbiology pharmacist at Idaho State University. She serves as interim department chair of Pharmacy Practice and Administrative Sciences and as a preceptor for pharmacy students, earning her both Teacher of the Year and Most Influential Professor awards.

She also serves on the ECHO Idaho Opioid Addiction and Treatment panel and the COVID-19 panel, discussing complex pharmaceutical/medication management and clinical trials.

An advocate for healthcare education and patient empowerment, she's been a member of the Statewide Opioid Strategic Plan and Workgroup Committee. Cathy has provided naloxone trainings for organizations and community members, as well as opioid education to prescribers, since 2009.



"There is a huge demand for accurate and quick lab testing and this requires multiple people to make it happen. The biggest challenge is staffing and finding enough qualified people."

- Bart Hanson

Bart Hanson, Minidoka Memorial Hospital

Minidoka Memorial Hospital is fortunate to have Bart Hanson as its laboratory manager. While it has been a trying year for many in health care, Bart has gone above and beyond to serve the community, according to his nomination.

He recognized the need for COVID-19 testing early in the course of the pandemic and acquired the necessary lab equipment and testing supplies for the critical access hospital in Rupert. Then he led employee education efforts to identify and treat patients with the virus.

Bart believes that working in a rural hospital is all about the patient, and it shows in his willingness to get whatever is needed, no matter the day of the week or time of day. The outcome of such effort is always the best reward, he says.

"The biggest opportunity in health care is recruiting young rural residents into health professions and then returning them to their home communities to work."

- Rylee O'Neill



Rylee O'Neill, SE Idaho Area Health Education Center

Rylee O'Neill, MPA, is the director of the Southeast Idaho Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and director of evaluation for the Idaho Rural Interdisciplinary Health Collaborative (IRIHC) at Idaho State University.

Through the SE Idaho AHEC Scholars program, she prepares 30 interdisciplinary health students to care for rural and underserved communities each year. This nationally recognized education and training program focuses on preparing a diverse, culturally competent healthcare workforce.

She also helped organize an interprofessional student club at ISU and through the IRIHC, seeks to develop a network of behavioral health service providers that focuses on opioid use disorders, medication-assisted treatment and evidence-based practice.



"One in every four Idahoans is a family caregiver. Now more than ever, it is necessary to support caregivers in rural communities and provide them with support and programs for their journey."

- Mike Hirschi

Mike Hirschi, Area V Agency on Aging

As director of the Idaho Area V Agency on Aging (AVAA), Mike Hirschi works to ensure that older adults and individuals with disabilities in seven Southeast Idaho counties are provided with services to maximize their independence and quality of life.

Mike has been instrumental in bringing the Powerful Tools for Caregivers class to the Pocatello area and is helping to develop an online version. He recognizes the disparity of resources for rural caregivers and is driven to advocate for support services for those families.

In addition to AVAA services to help individuals age in place, Mike has encouraged older adults in Southeast Idaho to participate in research studies at Idaho State University, ensuring a voice for rural older adults.

*"My passion is rural communities and the people who live there. I encourage our rural nursing students to bring back their expertise to their communities, enriching health and healthcare delivery."
- Melody Weaver*



Melody Weaver, Idaho State University

Melody Weaver, PhD, FNP, is a clinical assistant professor at the Idaho State University School of Nursing, teaching both nurse practitioner students and undergraduate nursing students. Her research interests focus on rural older adults, in particular those with dementia and their caregivers, as well as disenfranchised rural populations.

Melody was instrumental in providing consultation, advocacy and patient screening for COVID-19 in the Pocatello area. Early on, she supervised nursing students to provide ISU student screening at a drive-through location and later, on campus.

With an interest on rural health disparities, she has also designed research aimed at increasing awareness of prediabetes among Latino and Hispanic populations in rural Idaho communities.

Membership Matters

The Idaho Rural Health Association provides a voice on rural health issues through advocacy, communication, education and collaboration.

Thank you to our organization members:

Bingham Memorial Hospital in Blackfoot
ECHO Idaho, University of Idaho
Idaho Academy of Family Physicians
Idaho Alliance of Leaders in Nursing
Idaho Association of Nurse Anesthetists
Idaho Bureau of EMS and Emergency Preparedness
Idaho Bureau of Rural Health and Primary Care
Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine
Idaho Health Data Exchange
Idaho Hospital Association
Institute of Rural Health, Idaho State University
Minidoka Medical Center in Rupert
Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences
Southwest District Health Department
SW Idaho Area Health Education Center at Jannus
Syringa Hospital and Clinics in Grangeville
The Hospital Cooperative
Weiser Memorial Hospital
Family Medicine Residency of Idaho/Rural Rotation Residents
Idaho WWAMI Medical Education Program/Trust Scholars

And dozens of individual members interested in rural health.



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