Nightingale Luminary Awards (2022)
Nurse in Clinical Practice - Leadership (Region: Nurse works in: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel counties)

Jennifer Miller MSN, RN, CARN

OJnYZayO

Entry details

Are you nominating yourself?	No
Nominator's name	Daniel Caplin DO
Nominator's employer	Colorado Addiction Treatment Services Inc
Nominator's work phone	970-828-3030
Nominator's title	Medical Director
Nominator's cell phone	970-903-3621
Nominator's email	docdsc64@gmail.com
Confirm nominator's email	docdsc64@gmail.com
Nominee's home address	454 Jenkins Ranch Rd
Nominee's home address city	Durango
Nominee's home address state	CO
Nominee's home address zip code	81301
Nominee's home/mobile phone	575-770-2466
Nominee's email address	jennstevens@hotmail.com
Confirm nominee's email address	jennstevens@hotmail.com
Nominee's employer	Colorado Addiction Treatment Services Inc
Nominee's employer address	72 Suttle St Suite B
Nominee's employer address city	Durango
Nominee's employer address state	CO
Nominee's employer address zip	81303

Nominee's title	Director of Clinical and Administrative Operations
Employer type	✓ Behavioral Health Clinic or Center ✓ Doctor's Office ✓ Other
Nominee currently works	Full-time
Nominee's years in nursing practice	10
Does the nominee currently hold a RN license?	Yes
In which state(s) is the nominee licensed?	CO
Degrees received	✓ ASN - Associate of Science in Nursing ✓ MSN - Master of Science in Nursing ✓ Other

Other degrees received

Bachelor of Business Administration, Major of Finance

Colleges attended

University of Texas in Austin
University of New Mexico

Previous professional employment (nursing)

Holy Cross Hospital, Taos NM - Emergency Room RN
University of New Mexico Nursing Program - Adjunct Nursing Instructor

Nominee's current certifications	✓ OTHER

Other certifications held

Certified Addiction Registered Nurse (CARN)

Area of recognition	Leadership

What is the leadership role of the nominee?

Jennifer Miller is the Director of Clinical and Administrative Operations for CATS, an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) which provides medication assisted treatment (MAT), including methadone, for individuals suffering from Opioid Use Disorder. Jennifer oversees all regulatory and compliance standards and requirements, in addition to, all licenses, certifications, community outreach and education, and all staffing and billing responsibilities. OTPs are required federally, to have accreditation through an accreditating body like The Joint Commission. Jennifer created and maintained over 1700 standards to remain in compliance with the accredidating institution, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). She developed policies and procedures, protocols and processes for staff to follow to ensure all standards, logs, checklists

and reports are compliant. Jennifer provided community education to raise awareness of the opioid crisis in our region and how to best serve underserved populations, including pregancy and postpartum, women, homeless, adolescent, rural and the uninsured.

What issue was the leader addressing?

Jennifer is constantly focused on several issues including community awareness, opioid treatment in rural areas and reimbursement. Jennifer presented education on treatment barriers in rural areas on numerous occasions. She is passionate about finding innovative ways to promote awareness of the difficulties of rural opioid treatment including changing federal and state regulations regarding MAT home dosing, transportation barriers including distance to treatment, low reimbursement rates compared to the Front Range and attrition from treatment due to lack of resources within close proximity. She works tirelessly to ensure MAT is available to this community. She provides outreach to local mental health and medical facilities to promote quick access to treatment, including obstetric nurses at Mercy Regional Medical Center, so women can quickly begin treatment during pregnancy. She applied for grants to get uninsured individuals into treatment without financial resources and she assists in the patient application process for Medicaid and Medicare.

What was the specific leadership taken and what was the goal to be accomplished?

Jennifer's passion is to raise awareness of the opioid crisis in rural Colorado and improve access to treatment. In addition to the community outreach she provides, she also works closely with the Office of Behavioral Health and Colorado Organization for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (COTOD) to brainstorm innovative ways to provide effective treatment in rural Colorado. She facilitated the agreement between Medicaid transportation services and patients in need of, and currently in treatment, to ease access to MAT. During the first COVID wave in 2020, she wrote policies aimed at the continuation of treatment and worked hard at keeping patients in treatment by easing regulations, in accordance with state and federal policies, so patients could continue receiving MAT safely. She worked closely with Medicaid to ensure financially insecure patients could swiftly receive state assistance and consistently follows each patient closely to ensure all are covered by a payer source.

What was the outcome related to the goal?

Changing regulations at the federal and state levels is difficult and easing access to opioid treatment in rural areas takes time. When she is not working on trying to change regulatory requirements to ease access to treatment, she checks in with the OTP patients individually to discuss unique concerns. Almost all of our OTP patients have a history of trauma and Jennifer is excellent at therapuetic communication and her calm presence in the clinic is a source of stability and familarity to our patients. The biggest hurdle for Jennifer is reaching individuals in need and keeping them in treatment. This requires focused community effort and collaboration and an awareness of the resources needed and the extent of the opioid crisis in rural Colorado. Just listening to her talk with patients and community members, you can viscerally feel her compassion for those suffering from addiction and her desire to heal.

How will the outcome be sustained?

Because changing community stigma to addiction is difficult, consistent and constant messaging from passionate advocates is necessary. The COVID pandemic has slowed community outreach and education but has contributed to the sharp increase in addiction and opioid related deaths and overdoses. Rural areas are harder hit due to scarce resources and isolation, which are main contributors to addiction. Policies surrounding reimbursement, grant funding and access to treatment are constantly changing so Jennifer is always trying to find innovative ways to maintain treatment standards so patients are not negatively affected. She continues to develop relationships with community members to increase awareness of the opioid crisis so our community can work towards easing the crisis together. She is a consistent presence at multidisiplinary meetings advocating for the underserved and she tries to bring new contributors to the table. I am confident she has saved lives in the process.

How did this activity improve the quality of patient care and/or the health care environment?

Because of her effective work with funding sources, the addiction clinic has remained open with adequate staffing in a rural setting. Because of her outreach efforts, the OTP has received referrals from medical and mental health providers and has facilitated and improved the continuity of care between healthcare providers. Her attempts at easing community stigma has decreased patient fear and trepidation in entering and maintaining treatment. Patients know Jennifer is always advocating for them by improving processes to breakdown the barriers to rural access to treatment.

In 2018, we changed our name and location. Jennifer obtained new licenses and certifications by working closing with SAMHSA, OBH and the DEA, coordinated efforts to move the OTP to the new location and created all new contracts with Medicaid and other third party payers. Her passion, work ethic, efficiency and ability to get thing done are nothing short of amazing.

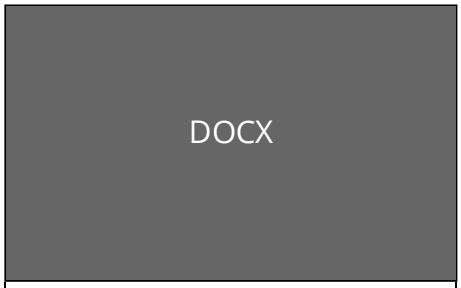
Additional comments related to leadership

During Jennifer's leadership, staff attrition is very low. She maintains a positive work environment, not only leading and advocating for patients, but the staff as well. All staff members share the common goal of reaching those in need and maintaining patients in treatment, under her direction. In my 30 years of medicine, I have rarely worked with a nurse with such a singular passion in raising awareness to help the underserved and creating and maintaining contacts to promote her cause.
Jennifer is a nurse's nurse. If you ask her about nursing, her response is "I love being a nurse!". She received her MSN in Nursing Education because she loves teaching nurses and the nursing profession in general. Because of her education and love of teaching, she is effective at providing information and is a skilled presenter. She developed and taught all inservice trainings in the OTP and she personally educated every patient on the disease process of addiction, signs and symptoms of addiction and naloxone administration. She is a great leader as she demonstrates how effective nurses can be in the support of those in treatment for addiction. Without her guidance, creativity, passion, the OTP would not have thrived.

Log in to nightingaleluminary.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



AM Nightingale ... 14 KiB



LW Nightingale L... 14 KiB