

Edward Hamilton Award

Candidate Name: CAPT Shannon Farr

Grade/Rank: O-6

Position Title: CAPT, Supervisory Optometrist

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Proposed citation: Edward Hamilton Award

Recommended by: LCDR Hanna Fylpaa

Submit to:

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LT, U.S. Public Health Service (She/Her)

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Population Health Surveillance Branch

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CAPT Farr has dedicated her entire career as an optometrist to serving Alaskan Native and American Indian (AN/AI) populations. She completed her residency at an Indian Health Service (IHS) clinic in Winslow, Arizona before relocating to serve in Bethel, Alaska; Nome, Alaska; and Juneau, Alaska. By serving these extremely remote areas she has earned two Isolated Hardship Awards for working more than 180 consecutive days in an area designated as isolated, remote, or insular and she received the Hazardous Duty Award for providing frequent care to remote villages accessible only by small aircraft susceptible to inclement weather. She has expanded care at each of her assignment locations by successfully implementing low vision rehabilitation programs; successfully writing grant proposals that allowed for acquisition of fundus cameras at her duty station, as well as other locations within the Alaska Area; creating eye provider and optometric assistant positions; and most recently she has become a practicing member of the neuro-optometric rehabilitation association (NORA). As a NORA optometrist she is the only optometrist within 500 miles that provides optimum visual rehabilitation education and services to improve the quality of life in patients with physical and cognitive disabilities due to acquired brain injury. In her efforts to maximize visual function of the patient's she serves she has volunteered her time as a member of the Federal Intra-agency Task Force on Children's Vision and Eye Health, served as the Federal Liaison and a board member for the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the sole low vision provider in the state, and acted as co-chairperson for the Indian Health Service Vision Health Promotion Committee. In addition to optometric outreach, she is a lifetime member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans for Foreign Wars, is a member of the Lion's Club, volunteered with the Tlingit and Haida Summer Youth Employment and Training Program and the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Program, mentored students for local science fairs, and volunteers regularly at the Juneau homeless shelter serving meals.

CAPT Farr is an adjunct faculty member at three colleges of optometry and has precepted countless optometry students at all three duty stations at which she has served. In fact, CAPT Farr created the optometric extern program at her current assignment at the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium in Juneau. Students that complete externships at IHS facilities frequently continue on to complete residencies and eventually careers within the IHS and USPHS, so her mentorship is helping to ensure future high-quality providers within the agency.

CAPT Farr received PHS Unit Commendation Awards for contributing to the joint civilian/military cooperative exercise, Arctic Care 2001, at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and for developing and implementing a Diabetes Clinic to provide comprehensive collaborative care to patients at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in 2000. She received a PHS Outstanding Unit Citation for exceptional performance during an Innovative Readiness Training Program during Arctic Care 1998. She was also an active planning member of the Arctic Care Military/Civilian deployment headquartered in Nome in 2006. The Norton Sound Health Corporation presented her an Outstanding Service Plaque for her service and dedication to the people of Norton Sound Region and the Teamwork Award for facilitating and coordinating the Tobacco-Free Task Force in Norton Sound Region in 2007. She served a 2-year term as a voting member in the Optometry Professional Advisory Group, acts as an official Health Services Professional Advisory Committee mentor and has presented to local departments and COA branches on career progression and award writing. She has been a member of the Armed Forces Optometric Society, the American Academy of Optometry, including a mentorship position, the American Optometric Association, the Alaska Optometric Association, the Pennsylvania Optometric Association, the Commissioned Officers Association, the American Public Health Association, and the Association for Arctic Business and Professional Women.

CAPT Farr continues frequent field travel to remote clinics in Southeast Alaska to provide eyecare in rural villages, presents at Alaska Area IHS meetings and full medical staff meetings, and maintains a full clinic load at her duty station in Juneau. She has submitted articles to local newspapers on

vision and eye health and has presented on the radio on similar topics. Her commitment to a career in the IHS and her dedication to maintaining and maximizing the ocular health and vision of the AN/AI patients that she serves demonstrates that she is an extremely qualified candidate for the OPAG Edward Hamilton Award.