

COVER SHEET
LESTER CAPLAN AWARD

Candidate Name: Derek Allmer, O.D.

Position Title: Director of Optometry

Work Address:

Oyáte Health Center
Eye Clinic
3200 Canyon Lake Drive
Rapid City, SD 57702

Work Telephone: (605) 355-2213

Work email: Derek.Allmer@ihs.gov

Proposed citation:

For outstanding effort and dedication in establishing the Oyáte Eye Clinic to serve its relatives both now and into the future.

Recommended by: Patrick Britton, O.D., CDR USPHS

Submit to:

Regina Sullivan, OD, MPH

LT, U.S. Public Health Service

xcu2@cdc.gov

Lester Caplan Award Nomination Page

Derek M Allmer, O.D., has worked in a wide variety of positions throughout his 25 year career. He brings experiences from retail optometry, private solo and group optometry practices, hospital-based optometry, and a group ophthalmology practice to the Indian Health Services.

Following a partial tribal assumption of the Rapid City Service Unit in July of 2019, Dr. Allmer was assigned as the Director of Optometry for the new Oyáte Health Center in Rapid City, SD. Since that time, Dr. Allmer has put in the extraordinary effort needed to get the Oyáte Eye Clinic established and fully equipped. Working as the sole eye care provider at the time, he used his clinical skills to produce a high patient satisfaction rate, working full-time as a provider and putting in the extra hours needed to complete the administrative side of his job. All of his over and above efforts have produced a technologically advanced clinic that allows for improved care of their patients. Since inception, the eye clinic has now grown to a more appropriate three optometrists following a recent full tribal assumption of the remaining Rapid City service unit. Waiting times have been reduced from three months to less than a month, allowing staff to better serve our relatives.

In realizing the importance of office appearance and first impressions to the patient, Dr. Allmer has spent his own time on evenings and weekends improving the décor of the clinic. An example includes bringing in personal artwork to hang in the reception, bathroom, and optical area. He has also patched wall defects, textured, and painted an exam room and the optical over a weekend to better match what he would expect from his previous private practice. Some evenings at home have been spent painting over yellowing plastic frame display boards to give them new life. A donation of modern display racks from our optical lab was secured and installed. Also, with the help of the optometry clinic staff, decluttering cabinets, window wells, and the rest of the office has resulted in a cleaner, more open environment. It is rare for Dr. Allmer to work only forty hours in a work week. All of this effort has been to revitalize and improve the Oyáte Eye Clinic to improve perception of quality and provide a higher level of patient satisfaction. As Dr. Allmer has frequently said, our IHS patients deserve just as good of care as a private practice patient.

One of Dr. Allmer's biggest accomplishments to date has been getting new, technologically advanced equipment to better manage their diabetic and glaucoma patients. During the transition process, Dr. Allmer began exploring available resources and requesting a list of diagnostic equipment to supplement and even replace aging equipment that had not been replaced in over fifteen years, eons in the world of technology. During his tenure, in a limited funding location the Oyáte eye clinic has managed to acquire an optical coherence tomographer with angiography, an ultra-widefield fundus camera with fundus auto-

fluorescence, corneal topography, auto-refractometry/keratometry, a new visual field unit with SITA faster, and a new exam lane. All of this has been to allow a higher level of care at the clinic to promote optometry's abilities and decrease the number of outside referrals, thus decreasing expenses and patient inconvenience as well as improving optometry's reputation and image.

Dr. Allmer has also been working on the clinic's records management system. He has instituted a process to transfer patient prescriptions from paper to electronic format, thus minimizing loss of patient records, improving HIPAA compliance, saving valuable resources, and requiring less filing time and space. He has also worked with the local IT staff to create more efficient, eye exam friendly templates to allow less time finishing chart work and more time to spend interacting with patients. These changes have improved patient flow and allowed patients to have a little more face to face time with staff.

Since the time of the 638 transition, the eye clinic has only recently approached adequate staffing levels. In full communication with hospital administration, Dr. Allmer continues to work on these and other challenges to improve the patient experience, all while continuing to see a full patient schedule. Despite the challenges of being short-staffed, Dr. Allmer and his team have worked diligently to continue providing high quality vision care. In continuing patient satisfaction surveys conducted since July of 2019, the eye clinic has received a 100% rating level of good or excellent on all surveys received.

In recognition of his tireless efforts to improve his patients' experience and provide high quality, technologically advanced eye care, I nominate Dr. Derek Allmer for the Lester Caplan Award for outstanding civil service optometrist. He has put in extraordinary efforts to establish the Oyáte eye clinic, making the clinic more modern, efficient, better equipped, and visually appealing. All these positive changes benefit the patients, Oyáte Health Center, the profession of optometry, and the Indian Health Service. As Dr. Allmer would tell you, it is all for the higher goal of taking better care of our relatives.

Derek M Allmer, O.D.

606 Enchantment Road

Rapid City, SD 57701

Professional Experience

Oyáte Health Center 3200 Canyon Lake Drive Rapid City, SD 605-355-2213

Director of Optometry

Supervisor: Todd Warren, PharmD, BCPS

07/2019 to present

- Primary care and hospital based optometry, responsible for administration of eye clinic.

Sioux San IHS 3200 Canyon Lake Drive Rapid City, SD 605-719-4000

03/2017 to 07/2019 and 01/2007 to 04/2010

Supervisor: Patrick Britton, O.D.

- Primary care and hospital based optometry, was then transitioned to 638 tribal clinic.

Independent Optical 808 Mt. Rushmore Road Rapid City, SD 605-343-6617

03/2014 to 03/2017

Supervisor: Self-employed

- Primary care optometry including routine eye exams and treating ocular pathology. I also worked with physical therapy to help restore posture through visual balance and performed all administrative functions.

Black Hills Regional Eye Institute 2800 3rd Street Rapid City, SD 605-341-2000

04/2012 to 03/2014

Supervisor: Self-employed

- Primary care optometry including post-operative surgical care.

Black Hills Optometry, LLC 318 Mt. Rushmore Road Rapid City, SD 605-399-3937

09/2010 to 12/2012

Supervisor: Co-owner with Dawn Wattenhofer, O.D.

- Full scope group optometry practice including refractive care, treatment of ocular pathology and refractive surgery co-management.

Eye Care Associates (Next to LensCrafters) 2200 N Maple Ave Rapid City, SD

03/2000 to 08/2010

Supervisor: Dawn Wattenhofer, O.D.

- Corporate optometry setting

Allmer Vision Center, PC 605 St. Joseph Street Rapid City, SD

Owner

10/2001-08/2004

- Full-scope private optometry practice

Education

08/1994 to 05/1998

Pacific University

Forest Grove, OR

- May 1998 Doctor of Optometry, with distinction
- Class of 1998 President, Fourth year representative, Treasurer, Equipment representative
- Student Government
- Beta Sigma Kappa Optometric Honor Society
- Amigos Eyecare for the needy
- Eye care mission trips to Taiwan and Brazil
- Second Place, 1997 national Varilux Optometry Knowledge Bowl

September 1990-May 1994 North Dakota State University

Fargo, ND

- Multiple honor societies and awards including Mortar Board

September 1986-May 1990

Beulah High School

Beulah, ND

- Class Valedictorian

Publication

- "Dorsal midbrain syndrome secondary to a pineocytoma" in Optometry-Journal of the American Optometric Association, April 2001

**Interests and
Hobbies
Activities**

- Hobbies include family, camping, Jeeps, photography, motorcycles, and most sports especially golf, volleyball and basketball.