

## LESTER CAPLAN AWARD

### NOMINATION PAGE

NOMINEE: Laura C. DeWitt, OD, FAAO

This is to nominate Laura C. DeWitt, OD, FAAO, for the Lester Caplan Award, recognizing the number, breadth and significance of her achievements as Supervisory Optometrist at Four Corners Regional Health Center (FCRHC). Since August 2016, Dr. DeWitt has led a remarkable series of improvements to optometry services with regard to access, quality and the development of her department workforce. Dr. DeWitt's specific achievements in the past three years include:

#### Access to services

- a 28% increase in eye exams despite a staff optometrist vacancy rate ranging from 67-100%; during one four-month period, Dr. DeWitt shouldered the entire clinical volume as the only optometrist while also executing her supervisory duties
- enhancement of Optical Dispensary services resulting in a more than doubling of visits from 200 in 2016 to an average of 559 for 2017-19
- implementation of and ongoing Project Manager for the Joslin Visual Network retinopathy screening program at FCRHC

#### Quality of services

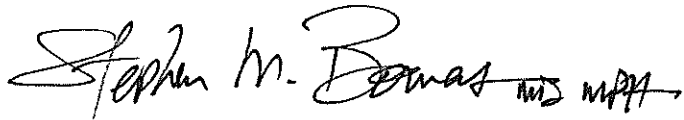
- successful achievement of the target for diabetic retinopathy screening for GPRA years 2017-19
- capitalizing on a one-time funding opportunity to upgrade approximately 75% of the department's optometry equipment so as to meet standards of care, including B-scan, OCT, slit lamps, visual acuity/field systems, autorefractors and BIO instruments
- championing and organizing facility-wide training on the use of Navajo language medical interpreters in the clinical setting
- achievement of the certificate in Quality and Safety through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Open School curriculum
- certification as a Level 1 Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)

#### Recruitment and retention

- establishment and ongoing role as preceptor and administrator for the FCRHC Optometry Intern Program with Marshall B. Ketchum University, providing students an opportunity to practice in a rural setting, mentoring in managing complex ocular disease, and exposure to the Indian Health Service as a career opportunity.
- revision of six Optometry Department position descriptions so as to equalize promotion potential and compensation relative to other Navajo IHS facilities
- recruitment of two optometrists and a medical staff assistant; promotion of two health technicians
- organizer of weekly evening hikes for FCRHC staff

In summary, two or three of the above accomplishments would be commendable for a first-time supervisor. To have achieved all of the above in three years is truly extraordinary at any point in one's career, let alone a career as young as Dr. DeWitt's. Emphasizing access and quality and the development of a committed workforce, Dr. DeWitt has laid a foundation for optometry services to the indigenous communities of the Four Corners that will endure for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen M. Bowers MD MPH". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen M. Bowers, MD MPH  
Chief Medical Officer  
Four Corners Regional Health Center