

COVERPAGE

Richard Hatch Junior OD of the Year Award

Candidate Name: Emily Mathiak

Position Title: Optometrist

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Proposed citation: nominated for the 2020 Richard Hatch Junior Optometrist of the Year Award for her exceptional contributions to the field of optometry, to the mission of the Commissioned Corps and to the Native American community she serves.

Recommended by: CAPT Barbra Cohn, Billings Area Optometry Consultant

Submit to:

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Narrative Justification for Awarding the

2020 Richard Hatch Junior Optometrist of the Year Award to LCDR Emily Mathiak

LCDR Emily Mathiak is nominated for the 2020 Richard Hatch Junior Optometrist of the Year Award for her exceptional contributions to the field of optometry, to the mission of the Commissioned Corps and to the Native American community she serves. She is routinely called upon to work outside her billet as a staff optometrist at the Crow/ Northern Cheyenne Hospital and comfortably performs at levels expected of senior officers. Her work embodies the Commissioned Corps core values of leadership, integrity, service and excellence. She is an inspiration to her coworkers, fellow officers and staff.

BACKGROUND: Over the last two years she has repeatedly stepped into the role as the Acting Chief of Optometry from three months to nearly 12 months. She has been organizing, directing and providing eye care for over 13,500 Native Americans at the Crow / Northern Cheyenne Hospital, Pryor and Lodge Grass Health Centers. In addition, LCDR Mathiak wrote contract extensions to ensure locum optometrists would continue serving the two satellite clinics with minimal disruptions.

During this time, LCDR Mathiak not only provided outstanding patient care, she continued to develop the U.C. Berkeley externship program which is broken down into five, ten and a half-week student rotations with two externs per rotation. To ensure all externs are prepared for the high volume of complicated patient symptoms LCDR Mathiak developed a didactic training program including weekly journal reviews, followed by case studies and in-house training. While the intent of the program was for externs, there have been several instances when hospital staff have attended the seminars to enhance their knowledge of the ocular system. She has developed strong interdepartmental relationships with the emergency room staff and pharmacy to the point that the optometry staff and externs within the optometry clinic are the first line resources and are often referred to for complicated case management.

IMPACT: With full-time staffing at its lowest in nearly ten years, Dr. Mathiak helped to increase productivity from 3,453 patients (2018) to 4,132 patients (2019) with billing exceeding \$1.4 million. In addition, LCDR Mathiak's preceptor score has held steady at 6.7 out of 7.0 in Berkeley's externship training program. These scores are averaged from all student feedback assessing provider expertise, teaching skills, treatment advice/case management, and professionalism. Due to the overwhelming positive feedback, the U.C. Berkeley School of Optometry has rated Crow Hospital among the top five rotation sites along with industry leaders including Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and U.C. Berkeley College of Optometry (an in-house rotation program).

Of the 28 externs that completed the program during the award period, 46% (13) applied for I.H.S. residency positions, two accepted full-time positions at I.H.S. and one is currently working at Crow Hospital as a locum. Many of the externs have kept in touch and have reported that they are using the advanced training in their own clinical practice.

LCDR Mathiak is willing to spend as much time as necessary to ensure the needs of the Optometry department and externship program are met. From the creation and inception of the

journal clubs, to coordinating paperwork and fingerprinting, to providing electronic health record training, to the delivery of high quality patient care, she has developed a top-notch program. Through the program she has enhanced interdepartmental relationships, recruited new optometrists into the Indian Health Service and the clinic has been rated a top rotation location within the U.C. Berkeley College of Optometry. For these reasons, LCDR Emily Mathiak is a valuable asset to both the Indian Health Service and the Public Health Service. She is truly worthy of the 2020 Richard Hatch Junior OD of the Year Award.