

Christian Thompson Nomination for Lester Caplan Award

We would like to nominate Christian Thompson O.D., Chief of the Chinle Service Unit Optometry Department, Navajo Area, for the 2010 Lest Caplan Award. Dr. Thompson has made many significant contributions to both the optometry department and the entire medical staff while working in the Chinle Service Unit.

We would like to highlight some examples of Dr. Thompson's contributions to IHS optometry.

1. Since assuming the chief position he has strived for constant improved access to care for our service unit patients. He has been an integral part in residing over the service unit with the best access rate to care for the Navajo area. This includes his successful recruitment of a full optometric staff in Chinle Service Unit (currently 8 OD's). Located in the center of the Navajo nation, the Chinle service unit clinics are located in rural remote areas, which can provide significant hurdles to recruitment of a highly qualified staff. Dr Thompson has played a key role in providing a favorable and challenging work environment for Chinle service unit optometry staff. The retention of our optometric staff has been high and above average from the other departments in our hospital.
2. Dr. Thompson has been an excellent advocate for increased compensation for the civil service optometry staff by increasing grade/step levels for qualified service unit optometrists. As well as learning and using the retention/recruitment incentives available to new hires until a new pay scale is adopted. He has advocated for market pay to ultimately benefit the retention of optometry for all of the Indian Health Service.
3. Dr. Thompson has shown a dedication to academic pursuits by re-starting the optometric residency program in Chinle. The initial pre-accreditation paperwork was handled solely by Dr. Thompson. He successfully recruited two residents in the two year tenure of this program and gained accreditation on the first request. His daily interaction with the resident has been excellent and he has spent countless hours (both at work and outside of work) assisting the resident to give them the best possible residency experience.
4. Dr. Thompson's has been a constant advocate to provide full scope optometric care in the Chinle service unit. He has made optometry a critical component of the healthcare experience. He resides over a department that provides 24/7 on call services for the busy Chinle emergency department and urgent care.
5. He has also shown great leadership outside our department during his tenure as chief of staff for Chinle hospital. He helped update the medical credentialing process to an electronic system. He received the Navajo Area Director's Award for Exceptional Performance in 2004 for these efforts. He also received the National Council of Clinical Directors Medical Provider of the Year award in 2007. He continually works at fostering a favorable working environment between other medical departments at the Chinle Comprehensive Healthcare facility.

5. Dr. Thompson has been the driving force behind creating an updated and extensive list of peer reviewed standard of care guidelines for the Chinle Service Unit optometrists to use in treatment of their patients. He has been a proponent in sharing these guidelines with other IHS clinics/service unites.

In conclusion we feel Dr. Thompson deserves to be recognized for his numerous accomplishments while working for IHS optometry. His constant message to staff is that optometrists should serve as advocates for their patients, not only in regard to optometric care but to help them navigate through our medical system. He has consistently shown this “advocacy mentality” in his interaction with referral specialist and other healthcare departments.

CV attached

Nomination: Ryan Scarborough, OD, Tsale Health Center
Val Sharpe, OD Chinle Comprehensive HealthCare Facility
Monica Faley, OD, Pinon Health Center
Brian Petracca, OD Chinle Comprehensive HealthCare Facility
Jennifer Murray, OD Chinle Comprehensive HealthCare Facility
Oliver Solis, OD, Pinon Health Center