

Ackerman named North Dakota champion

TyAwna Ackerman, a registered nurse at Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center (JMHCC) in Elgin, has been named as North Dakota's Childhood Immunization Champion.

Ackerman received the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Childhood Immunization Champion Award for North Dakota. The award recognizes individuals who make a significant contribution toward improving public health through their work in childhood immunization.

Ackerman was recognized for her work in launching a childhood immunization program at JMHCC.

"TyAwna and her team have been working very hard to get an immunization program started at JMHCC," said JMHCC CEO Theo Stoller. "TyAwna has been devoted to increasing the vaccination rate in North Dakota. Thank you for making sure that our patients are number one in your heart."

Ackerman has been the clinic nurse supervisor since 2017. She started working at JMHCC as a CNA in 2013 and obtained a bachelor of science degree as a registered nurse in 2015.

This year marks the seventh annual presentation of the CDC Childhood Immunization Champion Award. The CDC honors one champion from each state to recognize individuals who are working at the local level. It honors those who are doing an exemplary job or going above and beyond to promote or foster childhood immunizations among children 0-2 years old in their communities.

Award recipients are recognized for leadership, collaboration, innovation and advocacy.

"I am truly honored, humbled and excited to receive this award. It is always better to prevent a disease than to treat it after it occurs. It is very exciting that JMHCC is able to provide this vital program to our community," Ackerman said.

Ackerman has been the catalyst in launching a childhood immunization program at JMHCC and its affiliated clinic, the Elgin Community Clinic. Prior to the program's launch in April 2017, childhood immunizations were not available at the medical facility.

Launching an entirely new program is not an easy task, but Ackerman tackled it with professionalism and care. A pediatrics room was created at the Elgin Community Clinic to make children feel more comfortable at the facility. Supplies were purchased, clinic nurses were trained on how to vaccinate infants and a records system was created.

Now, she closely tracks immunization records and remains in contact with parents to keep them informed about immunization schedules.

Stoller describes her as a "rock star" for her role in creating the local immunization program to bring immunizations closer to home for all of the area's children. Ackerman showed great leadership in developing the program and continues to work tirelessly in informing the public about the importance of immunizations by sharing information for marketing efforts and continuing to educate herself about immunization protocols.

"TyAwna is dedicated to quality in all aspects. She has found the implementation of a new immunization program to be challenging, but rewarding. She has had to learn all aspects and dynamics of an immunization program and is now a passionate advocate for childhood immunizations. She has put a positive, proactive program in place," Stoller said.

By implementing an immunization program at the local facility, parents can now make same-day appointments at the Elgin Community Clinic without having to travel to another medical facility. Removing these barriers has increased immunization rates in the local community.

Vaccines now available include: DTaP-IPV, DTaP-IPV/Hib, Hep A, Hep B, Hib, HPV, MCV4, Men B, PCV13, Rotavirus, Tdap, MMR, MMRV and Varicella.