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Four Visiting Nurse Association of Ohio Employees Receive Samuel G. Lucarelli Award

CLEVELAND, Ohio (February 1, 2017) – Visiting Nurse Association of Ohio recently honored four of its most dedicated employees with The Samuel G. Lucarelli Award. The Award was created to recognize outstanding VNA of Ohio employees who embody the organization’s passionate and patient-focused mission. Employees are nominated by supervisors who believe the individual represents the four traits for consideration: growth, innovation, quality and engagement.

The 2017 winners included:

Willette Dixon
Thomas Huggins
Lisa Marinkov
Melissa Plaster

Willette Dixon began her career at VNA of Ohio in 1989. As a Hospice Home Care Aide, she is always cheerful and kind as she efficiently and gently provides physical care to her patients. All staff, patients and family members whom she encounters, without exception, truly take delight in her presence. VNA of Ohio’s Hospice staff have been told many times by family members that Willette is the reason they love the VNA of Ohio’s Hospice program.

Thomas Huggins has been with the VNA as a psychiatric nurse off and on since 1991. In 2013, Thom was hired fulltime as the nurse for the Psychiatric Bridge Program. Since then, he’s initiated and participated in many activities, going above and beyond the call of duty. For example, he participates in the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County for the Crisis Intervention Training Program, presenting a highly-praised two-hour training on Therapeutic Communication for police officers. He’s also taken a strong interest in the opioid epidemic and has created a two-hour continuing education class for VNA of Ohio and the community to educate frontline workers on the crisis and how to prevent overdoses and assist individuals in seeking treatment.

Lisa Marinkov RN is the Clinical Care Manager for Hospice. In the past three years that she’s been with VNA, she has made many positive changes in Hospice. She fosters many referrals, partners with several facilities and hospices to maintain the contact she needs to make the admissions happen. She is the patient’s biggest advocate as she goes far beyond her call of duty.

Marinkov is always trying to keep Hospice thriving and she forever will believe the dream that *all* patients need care no matter the circumstances.



Melissa “Missy” Plaster is a Clinical Assistant in the VNA Mid-Ohio office. As the nursing scheduler, Plaster manages the nurse’s daily, on-call, weekend, and holiday schedules. She also works closely with Intake to staff the new admissions. She has worked in Medical Records/Rehab and as a clinical assistant. She is always willing to jump in and help, in whatever capacity that is needed.

About Visiting Nurse Association of Ohio

VNA of Ohio is a non-profit, community-based healthcare organization that has been helping patients for more than 100 years. The organization works with hospitals, doctors, community agencies and companies to provide services for patients in their homes. Services include skilled nursing care, mental healthcare, social work services, rehabilitation therapies, hospice and personal care assistance.

VNA of Ohio provides high-quality, comprehensive home health and hospice care to promote health, independence and dignity to those living in our communities. Learn more at vnaohio.org.

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