



**Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor**  
**David R. Scrase, M.D., Secretary - Designate**

Media contact: Betina Gonzales McCracken (505) 222-9904

**February 6, 2019**  
**For Immediate Release**

## **New Mexico “Stars” to be recognized during 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Behavioral Health Day at the Legislature**

*Santa Fe* – The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Behavioral Health Day at the Legislature is being held today, Wednesday, February 6, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda.

The day is sponsored by Senator Mary Kay Papen, through Senate Memorial 16 as well as the Behavioral Health Planning Council, to recognize the many people who devote themselves to public policymaking on behalf of the thousands of New Mexicans who live with behavioral health disorders.

Each year Behavioral Health “Stars” are also recognized for their valuable contribution to the behavioral health field. The 2019 Behavioral Health “Stars” come from all over New Mexico.

- **Aaron Boswell** - Aaron has been a youth advocate since he was 16 years old. He lives and works in Albuquerque, where he has led nearly 50 youth engagement trainings, and trained 900 Children, Youth and Families Department staff, partners, and foster parents. He is a lead creator for the Youth Engagement 2.0, Youth Social Media. Aaron has successfully helped bridge the service gap between youth and adults in New Mexico.
- **Michael Coop** - Michael has worked in substance abuse prevention and early childhood intervention for 24 years. He is an innovative, collaborative community partner and has consistently gone above and beyond to ensure state and community level success. Michael and his staff provide technical assistance in coalition building; building capacity to address substance abuse issues; strategic planning and evaluation. Michael is based in Santa Fe, and works on projects throughout New Mexico.
- **Philip Fiuty** - Philip has been serving the communities in northern New Mexico since 2001. He was the second manager of the New Mexico Department of Health’s Harm Reduction Program, and continues today as the Harm Reduction Program Manager for the Santa Fe Mountain Center. He has worked tirelessly to expand low-threshold, person-centered services for the underserved by providing access to syringe exchange services, naloxone, buprenorphine, primary care, and Hepatitis C treatment for injection drug users and their families.
- **Patrick Gallegos** - Patrick is in recovery from addiction and mental health issues and exemplifies the potential of a person when supported by peers and able to live in a safe and caring environment. Patrick was incarcerated for crimes related to substance abuse, during which time he was unable to receive treatment for his mental illness. After spending time in New Mexico

Behavioral Health Institute in Las Vegas, he began mentoring others released from the Institute and volunteered to support his elderly neighbors. Patrick lives and works in northern New Mexico, and demonstrates the ability to recover and the importance of serving others.

- **Dianna Hassemer** - Dianna is a Certified Peer Support Worker at the Pecos Valley Medical Center (PVMC) where she works in the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program. She is dedicated to helping the patients of PVMC through their recovery from substance use disorder by forming genuine, empathetic connections with them. She is passionate about educating the community of Pecos and rural northern New Mexico about MAT.
- **Joell Jones** -Joell has successfully worked through adversity and addiction to become a Certified Peer Support Worker, and dedicates her life to helping others. She works as a Peer Support Coordinator with Magellan Health Care in San Juan County, and has experience as a Community Support Worker and Comprehensive Community Support Services supervisor. She volunteers as a peer trainer with the Office of Peer Recover and Engagement, and leads classes to help people become more active, productive community members.
- **Wendy Linebrink-Allison** - Wendy's positivity and dedication in support of behavioral health community outreach and support inspires New Mexicans across the state. Wendy has developed strong relationships with behavioral health professionals, community members, and peers. She has trained more than 500 youth in Mental Health First Aid, and thousands of individuals in the suicide prevention strategy Question, Persuade and Refer. Additionally, she has provided trainings on opioid use disorder and Naloxone administration to approximately 500 people, and has conducted five workshops on "Managing Your Chronic Disease." Wendy has served on the boards of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Association of New Mexico, and the Office of Peer Recover and Engagement Advisory Board.
- **Amy McNulty** - Amy is employed with Mesilla Valley Hospital in Dona Ana County working with people in recovery from addiction and mental illness. Her caring and supportive nature sustain all in her care, and she has continued to provide inspiration to people despite the recent passing of her husband.
- **Donna Naranjo** - Donna is a Victim Advocate for Eight Northern Indian Pueblos, Inc. She is a Certified Tribal Court Legal Advocate from the U.S. Department of Justice - Office on Violence against Women. She works in the Peacekeepers Domestic Violence Program where she helps victims of domestic violence find resources to rebuild their lives. Donna also facilitates a weekly victim support group. Donna also works with children of domestic violence.
- **Sharon Orchard** - Sharon is an ideal model of recovery and wellness. She serves as a board member of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for Albuquerque and New Mexico. She has been trained in NAMI Smarts for advocacy as well as Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), and teaches weekly WRAP classes in Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. Sharon is a Certified Peer Support Worker who actively supports individuals and their families through her teaching and fundraising efforts.
- **Micah Pearson** - Micah serves on the Doña Ana County and national boards of National Alliance on Mental Illness and participates in local community groups focused on the intersection of healthcare and criminal justice. Micah brings together members of these two somewhat divergent groups to identify a unified vision of care and improve public safety. He appreciates others' perspectives and find common ground, a skill which has gained him credibility with multiple agencies, and provided him the opportunity to build partnerships within both judicial and healthcare systems.
- **RedWing Shirley Pino** - RedWing Shirley Pino is a member of the Santa Ana Pueblo as well as an active member of the Local Collaborative 16 from Sandoval County. She is a master artisan clothier who shares her artistic knowledge freely to promote community wellness by encouraging

creativity and self-worth. She serves as a constant inspiration to all she knows, and works tirelessly for her community.

- **Dr. Joy Pollard** - Dr. Pollard holds a Ph.D. in Disability Disciplines and launched the Behavior Change Institute to provide services throughout New Mexico for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Dr. Pollard has incorporated the intensive approach of Applied Behavior Analysis in her services. For the past five years, she has worked to create access to services in Alamogordo and has incorporated telemedicine technology to help address healthcare barriers in rural and underserved communities.
- **Kai Porter** - Kai is a reporter for KOB4 news in Albuquerque and has focused attention on suicide prevention with his feature “Eye on New Mexico.” For the segment, Kai extensively researched suicide and reported that he lost his father to suicide. The personal details he shared added tremendous impact to the story, and helped to highlight the importance of suicide as a public health issue. Kai delivered a powerful message of hope, and provided a crucial reminder of the importance of addressing mental health issues without shame or embarrassment.
- **Michael Rooney** - Michael is a graduate of the Second Judicial District Court Veterans’ Court program, and a Certified Peer Support Worker (CPSW). In his role at the Veteran’s Administration Michael manages the Peer Mentor program for the Veteran Treatment Court, and volunteers for Forward Flag to help prevent veteran suicide and raise awareness of suicide rates among veterans. Michael works in Albuquerque, and is a strong supporter of recovery events throughout the state. He is unselfish with his time to support veterans and their families.
- **Julian Trillo** - Julian is an advocate for People with Abilities and a former Foster Youth Advocate. He serves as the lead youth coordinator for the New Mexico Chapter of Youth Motivating Others through Voices of Experience. Julian unites youth and adults in New Mexico and nationally. He currently resides in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

#### **2019 JOHN HENRY AWARD**

- **Therapy Dogs, San Juan Regional Medical Center** - Therapy dogs exemplify appropriate responses to human crises. Their mere presence provides comfort and solace to those in need. They were true champions when two students were tragically slain at Aztec High School in December 2017 and continued to provide comfort to students, staff, and community members at the one-year anniversary of the shooting. The dogs are dedicated to San Juan Regional Medical Center patients and to community members throughout San Juan County.

#### **2019 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

- **Chris Wendel - Lifetime Achievement Award** - Chris founded Recovery Santa Fe, a nonprofit agency that focuses on increasing awareness and reducing stigma of recovery. She served on the New Mexico Behavioral Health Planning Council and the federal Center for Substance Abuse Treatment National Advisory Council. Chris serves on the Santa Fe County DWI Planning Council as well as the Recovery Communities of New Mexico task force. Chris chairs the Board of the Santa Fe Recovery Center and has worked tirelessly to assist the organization with recent substantial growth and expansion. She continues to improve outreach and awareness activities through the annual Recovery Day Celebration. Chris has truly made significant and lasting changes to behavioral health services and awareness for all New Mexicans.
- **Betty Whiton** - Betty is a licensed social worker with decades of experience working to improve mental health and crisis response services in New Mexico. A retired school counselor for Albuquerque Public Schools, Betty is now a community representative to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Government Commission Crisis Intervention Committee. She is serves as president of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) executive board. The Crisis Intervention Team she helped develop to train officers in the Albuquerque Police Department is

being designated a NAMI Signature Program to be replicated across the country. Betty helped create a panel of peers and family members to present the face of the mental illness experience to police officers across the state.

### **2019 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION DIRECTOR'S AWARD**

- **Susie Trujillo** - Susie served as one of the first coordinators of the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Council 27 years ago. Now named Community Health Councils, the group is tasked with implementing new legislation to address poor outcomes for women, children and families. As an educator, Susie facilitated the purchase and use of health curricula for several school districts in southern New Mexico. While working with Gila Regional Medical Center (GRMC), Susie served as a Government Liaison, and is responsible for increasing access to healthcare services and the creation of GRMC's Cancer Center. She is a member of the Local Collaborative and involved with several other groups, and for more than a decade has worked to expand access to behavioral health services. Those efforts have helped to establish the new Tu Casa Treatment Center in Silver City, operating through Hidalgo Medical Services. The Center offers a continuum of behavioral health treatment services based on a medical model. The establishment of Tu Casa represents the fulfillment of one of Susie's longtime dreams. She remains involved in the expansion of behavioral health services on local and state levels, and seeks the most current treatment services to provide compassionate support and improve lives. Susie's dedication has truly enhanced the lives of hundreds of New Mexicans.

###

Betina Gonzales McCracken  
HSD Acting Communications Director  
CSED Deputy Director  
[Betina.mccracken@state.nm.us](mailto:Betina.mccracken@state.nm.us)  
(505) 222-9904