



National Cooperative of Health Networks Association

News Release

MEDIA CONTACT: Linda K. Weiss, LCSW, Executive Director
217.549.4121 - lweiss@NCHN.org

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LOCAL LEADER WINS NATIONAL AWARD

2021 NCHN Outstanding Emerging Health Network Leader – Angelina Salazar (Grand Junction, CO)



Angelina is the Chief Executive Officer of Western Healthcare Alliance and its affiliated companies, Healthcare Management and the Community Care Alliance. Working with the Board of Directors, key stakeholders, and the executive management team, she establishes long-range goals, strategies, plans, and policies for the overall benefit of rural healthcare in Colorado and eastern Utah. She joined the WHA team in May, 2016 to strengthen and lead the marketing and communications programs. In January 2019 she was named CEO after stepping into the interim role in July 2018.

Angelina started her career in education quickly advancing her role from Outreach Coordinator to Regional Development Director for a national nonprofit. After many years of developing programming and support, Angelina was recruited into the realm of healthcare. She started in marketing for a Critical Access Hospital in western Colorado, quickly advanced to Director of Customer Service, Marketing, Community Relations, and Development. Before leaving the hospital to join WHA, she held the executive position of Vice President of Business Development. In that role, she oversaw all communications, volunteers, marketing, physician services and identified business development opportunities. She established and implemented the infrastructure to support the organization through state and federal grants, fundraising events, and the establishment of a foundation.

In addition, Angelina serves on the National Cooperative of Health Networks Board of Directors, the Colorado Health Institute Board of Directors, the Saybrook University Board of Trustees, the Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions Advisory Board, and the Prime Health Advisory Board. Her dedication to solving rural healthcare challenges and building strong relationships in the community have helped to build visibility, impact, and financial stability.

Angelina possesses a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English with a minor in Spanish, two Master of Arts Degrees in Language Acquisition and Psychology as well as a certification in mediation and conflict resolution.

Angelina accepted her first CEO position with an organization that lost four key executives in less than a year. It was also an extremely volatile time in the US and Colorado for healthcare. Angelina had to focus on rebuilding moral within the organization, to create an organization that inspired member trust and engage staff to reaffirm the Western Healthcare Alliance (WHA) mission and values.

Her courageous efforts have led to continually rising employee satisfaction scores (based on Modern Healthcare's Best Places to Work) and membership engagement (meeting attendance, new members, program development, increased educational offerings, and no rural hospital closures in Colorado) demonstrating that Angelina has, in a short period of time, established WHA as a national benchmark for how to support rural healthcare.

Angelina exudes all important leadership qualities including: intellect, genuineness, humility, humor, engagement, vulnerability, and consensus building. She has the unique ability to know when push and when to pull, especially as it relates to member needs and network outcomes. Her measure of success is never her own, but rather the collective success of the organization predicated upon the cumulative accomplishments of the member hospitals and affiliated organizations.

As a communicator and collaborator, Angelina has brought disparate parties to the table and inspired conversations (too numerous to list here!) that create relationships based on mutual respect. The CEOs served by WHA repeatedly thank her for forcing these critical conversations and communications. They have resulted in trust and transparency growing amongst WHA members. Her collaboration efforts are further shown by supporting other rural health networks in the US through education and consulting.

Finally, Angelina is infused with passion for rural wellbeing. She has served tirelessly on local boards and spent countless hours visiting and listening to members, developing a deep understanding of their concerns and what it takes for WHA to help them be successful. She does these things selflessly and with great humility.

NCHN is a national professional membership organization comprised of health networks, alliances and consortiums dedicated to supporting and strengthening health networks. For more information about NCHN please visit their website at www.nchn.org.