



**The Rural Health Professional of the Year** recognizes healthcare professionals for their leadership in healthcare services throughout rural communities. Efforts taken into consideration include providing outstanding leadership, community involvement, and lasting contributions to the health care system, as well as their outreach efforts. The LRHA is honored to name Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator Peggy Millsap, CLS (ASCP, NCA), as the 2022 Rural Professional of the Year.

In addition to her regular duties as Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator at Union General Hospital, Peggy (known to her colleagues as “Peg”); was also appointed to represent the hospital as Union Parish’s community spokesperson under the “**Community COVID-19 Awareness Outreach Program**” and the “**Antibiotic Stewardship Grant.**” Peg began her work by building bonds with twenty-nine of Farmerville’s local businesses, banks, churches, restaurants, health units, community-based organizations, and the local plant. She developed relationships and built trust by supporting local business leaders’ ideas within the mission of the grants.

Under the “**Community COVID-19 Awareness Outreach Program**”, Peg engaged with the public by listening and learning from the townspeople, initiating ideas and reasons for the risk factors, and educating on masking, testing, and COVID-19 symptoms. Peg listened to visitor concerns regarding COVID-19 with patience and compassion, stating that “respect and confidence are fostered in this manner.” Peg provided COVID-19 classes at the local high school, wrote weekly articles for two local newspapers, set up educational displays at various local businesses, and spoke on the importance of vaccines.

In her work under the “**Antibiotic Stewardship Grant,**” Peg provided education to the diverse employee population of Foster Farms, which includes individuals with limited education, limited English proficiency, and those without health insurance. Through this education, she promoted awareness of basic antibiotic stewardship and educated on the risks of inappropriate antimicrobial use, especially among employees with children.

In addition to direct work under these grant programs, Peg has served as a guest speaker twice for **The Lion Club**. She provided education on Long COVID-19 and “Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics and the Black Box Warning.” During her work in the community, Peg had the opportunity to observe the work of the “Tree of Righteousness,” which provides clothing and food to veterans, the elderly, and people experiencing homelessness. Inspired by the excellent work of this organization, Peg now gives her free time once per month to deliver food to two low-income families.

Peg has been described as a risk-taker who uses out-of-box thinking; a creative, energetic, humble, authentic, assertive, tactful, and bold educator and listener. When nominating Peg for this award, Kaitlin Thompson, Human Resource/Payroll Assistant at Union General Hospital, selected the following quote from Heidi Wells – “We can choose to be affected by the world, or we can choose to affect the world.”

In grateful appreciation and distinguished recognition of her hard work, devotion, and commitment to changing the world of rural healthcare, the Louisiana Rural Health Association is honored to recognize Peggy Millsap, CLS (ASCP, NCA), as the 2022 Rural Professional of the Year.