

Employee of the Year Nominee Profile
Aimee Quillen – Physical Therapy Department
Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority

At Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority, we believe excellence is not a one-time act but a daily commitment — a principle that Aimee Quillen lives out in every facet of her work. As a registered nurse specializing in wound and ostomy care within the Physical Therapy Department, Aimee exemplifies what it means to be a caregiver, a leader, and an innovator. She is a cornerstone of patient-centered care, driven by compassion, professionalism, and an unwavering dedication to improving lives.

Integrity

Aimee leads with humility and accountability, openly owning her decisions and actions and consistently choosing what's best for patients — even when the path is hard. Her integrity is most evident in the way she treats every patient like family, extending herself far beyond what her role requires. When faced with cases that others have given up on, Aimee doesn't walk away. She networks tirelessly with specialists across the state and beyond to find solutions — even when told, “there's nothing else we can do.” One provider said it best: “I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you.”

Responsiveness

Known for her adaptability and sense of urgency, Aimee is someone patients and staff alike trust to respond in critical moments. Her years of ICU experience shine through in her ability to make sound clinical decisions under pressure. Whether she's adjusting her schedule to accommodate late appointments, traveling monthly to CIHA's Cherokee County clinic, or skipping lunch to make sure patients are seen — Aimee delivers. She is reliable, accessible, and always prepared to act with compassion and efficiency.

Success

Aimee is a certified wound and ostomy care nurse (CWON) and an irreplaceable resource to her department. From helping patients manage complex care routines to arranging lifesaving referrals, her work quite literally saves lives and limbs. She has built strong referral pathways to interventional cardiologists and vascular specialists, ensuring timely treatment that once took months to secure. In many cases, her actions have shortened healing time and dramatically reduced amputation risks for members of the Cherokee community.

Teamwork

Aimee is a natural collaborator who understands that shared success is rooted in mutual respect and support. She's always willing to lend a hand, whether that's training a new clinician, organizing wound care stations for the hospital's skills fair, or initiating interdisciplinary discussions during patient appointments. Recently, she led a hospital-wide effort to improve pressure injury care on the inpatient unit, working across departments to identify gaps and standardize best practices. She's the person people call first — because they know they can count on her.

Innovation

Innovation comes naturally to Aimee. Whether it's crafting unique dressing solutions or launching a quality improvement initiative to enhance wound care, she's always thinking forward. She constantly evaluates ways to reduce patient travel burdens, has explored dialysis-based wound care coordination, and continues to attend national conferences to bring new knowledge back to CIHA. Her motto could easily be: "Time is tissue." And thanks to her efforts, our high-risk patients now receive specialized care in days, not weeks.

A Leader in Every Sense

Aimee Quillen is more than a nurse; she's a fierce advocate, a trusted colleague, and a quiet force of transformation at CIHA. She doesn't ask for recognition. But through her skill, compassion, and leadership, she has earned it tenfold.

It is with deep appreciation and respect that we recognize Aimee Quillen as a nominee for Employee of the Year at Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority.