

Employee of the Year Nominee Profile

Rhiannon “Rhi” Spicer – Nurse Manager, Analenisgi Inpatient Unit Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority

Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority values leadership as more than a job description, but rather, as a calling rooted in accountability, compassion, and community. Rhiannon Spicer, known to most as Rhi, embodies this vision with remarkable consistency. As Nurse Manager for the Analenisgi Inpatient Unit, Rhi sets the tone for excellence not only through clinical care but also through empathy, innovation, and the way she uplifts everyone around her. She is a powerful example of what it means to lead with purpose, making her an exceptional nominee for Employee of the Year.

Integrity

Integrity is the bedrock of Rhi’s leadership. She models it daily through her honest communication, ethical decision-making, and unwavering commitment to what’s best for her patients and staff. When issues arise, Rhi doesn’t deflect or delay — she takes full ownership. One such example occurred when a patient concern surfaced: rather than delegate or downplay it, Rhi addressed it directly with transparency, ensuring the situation was resolved with respect and care.

Her leadership reflects a deep sense of ownership over CIHA’s mission. She not only sets high standards, she lives them. Whether supporting a staff member through a tough shift or advocating for a patient’s needs, Rhi ensures that everyone in her care feels seen, heard, and valued.

Responsiveness

In a behavioral health environment where every moment matters, Rhi’s calm, focused responsiveness sets her apart. Whether it’s a sudden clinical change, a staffing crisis, or a family concern, she responds with clarity, efficiency, and grace. When the unit recently faced critical staffing shortages, Rhi led with urgency — reorganizing schedules, reallocating resources, and stepping in herself to keep care continuous and compassionate.

Her door is always open. Her presence is always steady. And her ability to listen, prioritize, and act makes her a leader her team depends on — not just during emergencies, but every single day.

Success

Rhi does more than just lead — she elevates. Her leadership has directly resulted in improved patient care processes, reduced wait times, and increased patient satisfaction. She has refined workflows within the Analenisgi Inpatient Unit, aligning systems more closely with patient needs and staff capacity — a balance that has made the unit both more effective and more compassionate.

She also extends her care beyond the walls of CIHA. Rhi is a proud advocate for the Cherokee community, supporting outreach efforts and ensuring her team is equipped to deliver culturally respectful and trauma-informed care. Her success is measured not only in outcomes, but in the dignity she helps restore every day.

Teamwork

Rhi sees leadership not as command, but as connection. She believes the best outcomes happen when everyone feels valued and supported — and she creates that space through humility and collaboration.

When CIHA undertook a hospital-wide patient safety initiative, Rhi didn't just participate, she facilitated, helping coordinate voices across departments and leading her team through the successful implementation of new protocols.

From health fairs to internal team-building, Rhi brings people together — not for credit, but for collective impact. She's also a visible presence in hospital activities, community events, and CIHA cultural celebrations. To her team, Rhi isn't just a manager — she's a motivator, a mentor, and a teammate in the truest sense.

Innovation

Rhi's innovation shines through her commitment to staff development. She recognizes that the best care starts with well-equipped, well-supported clinicians. That's why she actively creates and leads educational sessions tailored to her team's needs, offering more than required training and building a culture of learning and professional growth.

Her forward-thinking approach ensures that Analenisgi Inpatient staff are not only compliant with evolving best practices, but ahead of the curve. Whether it's exploring new models of trauma-informed care or introducing skill-building initiatives, Rhi's focus is always on how to make things better — for patients, for staff, and for the future.

A Leader Who Lights the Way

Rhiannon Spicer leads with clarity, care, and conviction. She inspires excellence by living it, makes room for others to grow, and proves every day that healing starts with human connection. Her commitment to her team, her patients, and the Cherokee community is never ending and her impact is undeniable.

We are honored to recognize Rhiannon Spicer as a nominee for Employee of the Year at Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority — a leader who embodies integrity, empowers change, and shows us all what it means to serve *from the heart*.