

# Tracey Cardenas: School Based Health Site Champion

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CIFC Health's own Tracey Cardenas, Medical Assistant and support staff at Danbury High School, has been selected as the CT Association of School Based Health Centers' "Support Staff Champion." This award is highly selective, with only two champions being named each year out of the thousands of SBHC employees around the state (one provider and one support staff). The award goes to an individual who has demonstrated their commitment to: Being an advocate for student health; Being

outspoken about student health; and Endorsing school health services.

Tracey has been with CIFC Health since 2016 and the SBHC team since 2019, serving as Medical Assistant and Support Staff for the nurse practitioner, social worker, and dental team at Danbury High School. In her nomination CIFC SBHC Program Manager, Melanie Bonjour, said, "Tracey's day to day support and contributions to the operations of the SBHC are a vital part of the health centers success, and not to be taken for granted. She fills a critical role as part of the integrated team, and so deserving of recognition for her long-standing dedication to her SBHC family."

Those she works with in the clinic have described her as "amazing" and said that she has running the SBHC "down pat." It's even not uncommon to hear someone exclaim "what would I do without her?" This is because Tracey has never once hesitated to assist with extra tasks, including training of new staff, assisting with vaccine clinics, conducting outreach, and volunteering to work at the main health center site when extra hands were needed.

On a recent morning at the SBHC, Tracey could be found working on a long list of student names in which she was assigning times. Tracey said, "it's today's vaccine appointment list that I created." Although this went beyond the established duties of her position, she took the initiative to ensure that the students health needs were being met while minimizing the disruptions to their school day. Indicative of the standard to which Tracey does all things, all students had been given passes, reminders calls had been made, vaccine forms had been sent out and received completed (after some follow-up calls), and their appointments were in the

system.

Melanie Bonjour elaborated on the work Tracey does to help staff and students alike,

"On a daily basis, the SBHC is like Grand Central Station at commuter time, with students revolving in and out of the center for scheduled medical, behavioral health and dental appointments, drop-in appointments, requests for appointments, crisis situations, food assistance, and many other reasons.

With a smile always on her face, Tracey consistently handles the steady flow of patients, so that their needs are addressed efficiently, and they are sent back to class efficiently. Work like an octopus with eight arms, Tracey answers the phone, write appointment cards and passes for students, enters appointments in the EHR, communicates with staff, and may take a student height and weight, or carry out some other medical assistant function."

Tracey, CIFC is grateful for your years of exceptional service to the organization and the entire CIFC Family is proud of you and joins in offering a heartfelt congratulations.