



Nolan Tarkington
Chief Nursing Officer

Animas Surgical Hospital submits Nolan Tarkington, RN, for the Colorado Hospital Association's Hospital Heroes recognition. Although many people at Animas Surgical Hospital have contributed greatly during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nolan Tarkington has been instrumental in leading our hospital's medical staff and incident command team. At the same time, he has tirelessly collaborated with other healthcare facilities, providers, and local public health professionals. Nolan has been and continues to be the glue that has bound our hospital together throughout this unprecedented public health crisis and focused our attention on safely providing care within our facility and being leaders in the community.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nolan established our COVID-19 Incident Command Team. Nolan continues to serve as our Incident Commander. Within our hospital he led the development of our hospital surge plan to both prepare for the possibility of caring for COVID patients in a surgical hospital while simultaneously preparing for an increase in demand for surgical services once non-elective surgical services could resume. Nolan worked with others to develop policies, procedures and effective strategies to ration PPE in times of shortages while at the same time ensuring our staff had the materials and supplies needed to safely care for patients. Throughout our response to COVID, Nolan has demonstrated a steady, calm, yet decisive demeanor. His tireless and steadfast leadership and actions resulted in gaining the confidence and trust of our medical and hospital staff and led to our ability to quickly and safely resume elective surgery.

Nolan has collaborated with other healthcare facilities, local public health and private laboratories to ensure our community would benefit from the resources and staff at Animas Surgical Hospital. Nolan spent countless hours informing other regional hospitals of the capabilities of our medical staff, nursing staff, facilities, pharmacy, and supplies. He took part in hospital tours of our facility, visited neighboring hospitals, and met formally and informally to develop the relationships and plan for Animas to respond. This aided our region in the development of a thoughtful regional surge plan in the event that the regional, acute hospital would exceed its internal surge plan for COVID patients.

Nolan also played a pivotal role in increasing our community's COVID testing capabilities. When PPE supplies were limited, he collaborated with a local, private lab to provide PPE, fit testing and specimen collection techniques to the lab and to local public health employees. Nolan coordinated the use of our facility's refrigeration to safely store specimens prior to transport to the state lab. It was through his collaboration with our local public health agency and others that our community's first drive through testing facility came to fruition. His dedication to the community has continued beyond the early response. He has continued to work within our hospital to expand testing for patients, employees and bring to our hospital the capacity and procedures to have a rapid COVID test available.

What is more impressive than all of Nolan's actions is the way in which he has taken the time to care for others. Nolan is rarely found sitting at his desk. He is out in our hospital, actively making sure that our clinical staff know what is expected and have the materials they need to care for patients safely. Nolan listens and takes the time to understand the challenge at hand. He brings the right people to the table to solve the challenge of the day. Rather than dictating next actions, Nolan empowers others to be engaged in developing solutions. He is often one of the first in the building in the morning and often one of the last to leave at night.



COVID-19 isn't the only thing on Nolan's plate, though. He transitioned to the Chief Nursing Officer position in the midst of the pandemic and began to further his education, starting work to complete his Master's in Nursing. In addition to his new job, Nolan is a part-time student, husband, and father to two young children. He has spent countless sleepless nights and weekends in the hospital working hard to keep our patients, our staff, our physicians, and our community safe. It's been a tremendous responsibility, but Nolan has handled it all with grace, humor, flexibility, and resolve.

At Animas Surgical Hospital, we are enormously grateful for Nolan's contributions. While we are recognizing his work over the past many months, there are so many others who have made similar contributions. Nolan represents the best in all our employees at Animas Surgical Hospital. It is through nominating Nolan that we are truly recognizing each employee of our hospital. It is each of us, caring for one another, that we celebrate. We are so appreciative of each and every frontline healthcare worker for the personal sacrifices they have made on behalf of our community.

*Nominated by:
Joe Theine
CEO
Animas Surgical Hospital*