

Director of Quality Management, Compliance and HIPAA (DQMCH)

Reports To: Executive Director of Health and Human Services

Supervises: Quality Manager and HIPAA Privacy and Security Officer

Location: Karuk Tribal Health Clinics in Happy Camp, Orleans, and Yreka

Salary: \$45,000 - \$60,000, depending on experience

Summary: The Director of Quality Management, Compliance and HIPAA shall serve as the administrator over JCAHO Ambulatory Accreditation, Corporate Compliance, and HIPAA laws and regulation. This position shall provide specialized support to all aspects of the Karuk Tribal Health Program and to the Karuk Health Council, in order to instill quality and compliance into the level of services rendered. The DQMCH shall conduct or coordinate staff training, convene committees, develop and implement policies and procedures, and shall report to the Health Council monthly. The main motivation of this position is to maintain compliance with JCAHO standards, Compliance and HIPAA laws and regulations, to increase quality of services, and reduce the organizations vulnerability to fraud and abuse.

1). What are your typical job responsibilities?

Administration of the following programs:

- Quality Management
- Accreditation (Health Care Standards Compliance)
- Corporate Compliance (Federal Regulation and Laws in regards to billing practices)
- HIPAA (Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

2). How do you really spend your day.

I spend the majority of my day working on a computer, attending meetings, answering staff questions, and working on projects.

3). How do you organize your day to ensure you get everything done?

I set goals and deadlines. When I know that something is coming due it becomes my priority.

4). What education/career paths lead you to this position? Were their any life changes that guided your way to this position?

Yes, I took pre nursing courses at COS and then trained to become a Licensed Vocational Nurse at Modesto Junior College. Then in 1994 I returned to COS and earned my Associates Degree.

My mother, a Karuk Indian, was born and raised in Happy Camp. However, I was raised in Lawndale, CA until 1961 when we moved to Happy Camp. I graduated from Happy Camp High School in 1965. As far as I was concerned Happy Camp was my home.

I enrolled in a nurse's aid course after high school and moved to Medford, Oregon to work at Rogue Valley Medical Center. There I worked on the orthopedic and pediatric floors. However, you need to know that I worked nights from 11:00 pm to 7 AM. I never had the same days off in a row, and usually worked all holidays. It was a good job and I really liked it.

After receiving my LVN I lived in Yreka and worked at Siskiyou General Hospital from 1969-1971. On December 26, 1970 I got married to Lester Aubrey, but he lived in Happy Camp and I stayed in Yreka to work at the hospital. Well that arrangement got tiring so around May I moved back to Happy Camp so I could live with my husband, who is also Karuk and a Native of Happy Camp.

After having two children, I felt the need to return to work and took a job with the Happy Camp Karuk Council as a Community Developer, and became active in building up the Tribe to receiving government funds and gaining Federal Recognition.

This became a focal point in my career. Here I learned all about Tribal Governments and here, because I was a nurse, was placed on the Board of the Shasta Trinity Siskiyou Rural Indian Health Project. Apparently, Indian Health Services was now offering care to California Indians.

I continued working with the Tribe on all avenues of Tribal Business, but went back to nursing for Dr. Shannon Thornton at his office in Happy Camp. Several years later, I took a job with Shasta Trinity Siskiyou Rural Indian Health Project (STSRIHP), as a CHR. Here I became familiar with the California Rural Indian Health Board (CRIHB), and Indian Health Service. I learned about "buy-Indian contracts" and "638" contracts as well.

I continued as a CHR for STSRIHP until September 1980, when I was hired to be the CHR Coordinator for the Karuk Tribal Health Program. I worked as a CHR, began Patient Registration, worked as a Dental Clinic Manager, Dental Assistant, and Nurse in the Orleans Clinic. I also acted as the HIV/AIDS Coordinator and Educator and wrote grants to assist this project. Sometime in the early 90's I was transferred to the role of grant writer for the health program. I wrote several grants, but when we received a Tribal Management Grant to support our efforts towards JCAHO Accreditation, I was transferred to the position of CQI Coordinator.

As CQI Coordinator (which was a great deal of quality management) I worked with all programs and departments in the health program. I've led the Karuk Tribal Health Program through four triennial surveys, which amounts to 12 years.

During my role as a CQI Coordinator, a Federal Regulation for Compliance and another one for HIPAA required program development at our local level. This is where I inherited the role as Compliance and HIPAA Director.

Because I stand in for the Executive Director during his/her absence, I became the Acting Director of Health and Human Services for about six months during a vacancy of this position. I am now back in my role as the Director of Quality Management, Compliance and HIPAA.

5. Uppers; what is the thing that you love most in your job?

I love having the ability and knowledge to develop programs, and meet various needs throughout the health program, which improves our services and management structure. I love working hard to serve the Karuk people and other Native Americans, especially when I see their healthcare improve. I'm proud to see quality health care provided to all out patients regardless of ethnicity. These are the things that make my job pleasurable.

6. Downers; what is the thing that you love least about your job?

I don't appreciate assumptions about me or my work. I would like to speak for myself. I'm truthful and I would like to be heard.

7. What inspires excites and or motivates you in your job?

I get excited hearing, seeing, or learning about issues or projects that need to be completed or developed, and I enjoy the buy- in of my coworkers.

8. What does your average work week schedule look like?

The average work week entails office work in my own office, meetings, and maybe travels to one of the other clinics. I usually work 8 hours a day, but depending on need, I may work up to 60 hours a week.

9. How do you relieve stress?

A brisk walk is really good during work hours. After hours, I attend Church and meet with fellow Christians, and at home I pray.

10. Does your job include a lot of traveling? Do you enjoy it?

There is some traveling associated with my job. I must keep up to date on Compliance and HIPAA, and the new standards from the accrediting bodies. I also must receive continuing educational units for my nurses' license. I'm very interested in things so I travel to learn more.

My first priority, when I travel, is to attend the sessions and learn what I came to learn. In my spare time, after classes, I might do a little touring, but it is very limited to the time available, which is usually after 5:00 pm.

Sometimes the stress of leaving home and loved ones fills me with anxiety, and lessens the enjoyment of the trip.

11. What advice would you give to someone interested in this line of work?

First of all, have an interest in health care. Enjoy hard work, and be willing to learn. Become a valuable team player; you'll be surprised at how much you can accomplish when working with your coworkers. Be prepared to offer suggestions or recommendations, and be willing to accept advice from others. Be able to find fulfillment in the work you do, because some sacrifice is required.

A Day in My World

My day usually begins (anywhere from 3am – 6am) taking care of family members by getting them off to work, or helping grandchildren off to school. In between, I'm getting ready to go to work as well.

I usually arrive at work by 8am, and greet coworkers a long the way to my office, and catch up on the news if there is any. After reaching my office, and putting my personal belongings aside, I turn on my computer and open my e-mail glancing through for anything that looks urgent. Then I look at my phone to see if there are messages waiting, and if so, check them. Many times so much work is generated by my e-mail and phone messages, that it's noon before I realize it.

After a quick check through my messages, I discuss the day with my assistant and the Executive Director, which usually is a follow-up on previous work. In doing this I may have added additional duties to my work for the day.

If I am not going to a meeting (usually 8:15 or 10:00 am) then I am planning for one. I may develop agendas, and prepare meeting packets for the meeting, or call a guest speaker, or work with coworkers on their contribution to a meeting. My assistant usually copies and distributes the meeting packets.

Sometimes I'm preparing my topic for a meeting, in which I am either training them, or telling them what I need from them or sharing information with them. Two days ago I shared new accreditation standards with them, and discussed ways in which I may help them. Another discussion a coworker and I shared with the staff was the presentation of a grant we wanted to obtain for our health program, its requirements, and what we needed from the staff. I also hear from other staff members, what they are doing in their programs and what they need from me.

During the day I receive requests from other departments which I fulfill, or I work on special projects, or fulfill other duties required of me by my job description. I receive and review mail, work on medical staff files, write letters; its just various job functions throughout a day, week or month.

No day is ever the same, and I never do anything according to an hour or minute. It's what I need to do and when I need to have it done, that sets my daily schedule. Around 5pm, I prepare my office for closure, and then leave for the evening.