



**Florida Behavioral  
Health Association**

Inform. Innovate. Influence.



2020

Awards of Excellence

## ■ Peer/Recovery Support Specialist of the Year Award



**Lori Thomas**

**Certified Recovery Peer Specialist**  
**Directions for Living**

Lori is a Certified Recovery Peer Specialist and has a truly amazing ability to use the lessons she has learned from her extremely traumatic life experiences to help others who are in deep despair. She makes every individual she encounters feel special, feel heard and feel loved. Lori informs her supervisor if she feels a client is at increased risk and also provides excellent communications with her peers. Lori goes above and beyond for her clients and makes them her top priority. She has served Adult Outpatient clients with severe and persistent mental illness for the last 16 years at Directions for Living. She treats approximately 225 clients each year through in-home, outpatient and telehealth services. Lori is professional, calming and humorous.

## ■ Supervisor/Administrator of The Year Award



**Niurka Rolo**

**Administrator for Children's Community  
Teams and Prevention Services**  
**Citrus Health Network, Inc.**

Niurka Rolo has been at Citrus Health Network for nearly 23 years. As the Children's Community Teams Administrator, she is instrumental and crucial in developing and expanding these services for more than a decade. In addition to the Children's Community Teams, Niurka has overseen the Outpatient Psychotherapy Department, specialty programs for youth involved in Juvenile Justice and specialty services for new mothers with postpartum depression. Niurka brings guidance, compassion and positivity. She displays professionalism not only through her wealth of knowledge, skills and clinical expertise, but also through her gregarious and infectious positivity that motivates all she meets.

## ■ Clinician of The Year Award (Youth)



**Amy Wilson**

**CATT Program Coordinator**  
**Clay Behavioral Health Center**

Amy Wilson is someone who goes above and beyond for patients and is great at helping clients achieve their goals. Amy individualizes treatment for the patient and staffs each client closely and regularly to ensure she is providing the best care possible. Amy will pay for items out-of-pocket for clients when she thinks something is necessary for treatment but might not be covered by a grant. Amy juggles her roles well and keeps a balance between her client caseload and her program coordinator role. Clients, community partners and parents of patients love her.

## ■ Clinician of The Year Award (Adults)



**Meredith Moran**

**Licensed Therapist**  
**Operation PAR**

Meredith Moran has worked at Operation PAR since October 2008. She has worked in several positions and currently performs substance abuse and mental health counseling treatment, where she serves over 90 clients each year. Since 2016, Meredith has worked on PAR's Outpatient program where she develops and edits new counselor training manuals, trains new counselors, develops checklists and creates innovative ways on how to work smarter. Meredith is the type of employee who can always be counted on to assist, guide and provide outstanding services to clients. She is the first to help mentor, model and teach new interns, offer tips and best practices to new employees and is the first to collaborate on new ways of treatment. Meredith is Operation PAR's Wonder Woman.

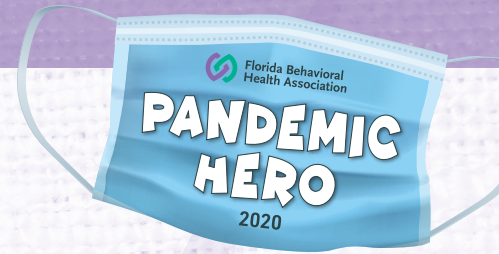
## ■ Medical Professional of the Year Award



**Edwin Gomez**

**Acute Care Psychiatrist**  
**David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health**

Dr. Edwin Gomez has been practicing psychiatry for more than 20 years in South Florida. The past five have been as the primary bilingual adult psychiatrist for the David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Unit, where he delivers exceptional, compassionate and individualized care to clients suffering from mental illness. In addition to the care he provides, Dr. Gomez takes extraordinary measures to engage the families of clients and incorporate them into care, treatment and discharge plans. He also provides psychoeducation both for families and the caregivers of clients before their discharge. He is the primary provider who conducts examinations for those who are committed under the Florida Baker Act at the Collier County Jail. In doing so, he exhibits a unique set of diverse skills in collaboration with community partners showing respect for law enforcement in the jail settings and dignified care to persons who are suffering from mental illness and confinement.



## Behavioral Health Pandemic Hero

This year a special award category has been established to honor the heroes who worked tirelessly to make sure mental health and substance use disorder services were available to those in need during the Public Health Crisis. The following six individuals provide extraordinary service throughout the pandemic, whether counseling, peer support, tele-behavioral health, IT support, medical care, custodial care or any other service that reached beyond the boundaries of traditional care or position responsibilities.



**Colleen Colandrea**  
RN  
SMA Healthcare



**Angela Dunbar**  
Administrative and  
Clinical Risk Manager  
Centerstone



**Brandi Gardner**  
Human Resources Manager  
Clay Behavioral Health Center



**Damia Kelly**  
Director of Community  
Treatment  
Directions for Living



**Moraima Trujillo**  
Chief Medical Officer  
Banyan Health Systems



**Ashley Valvano**  
Detox-Crossroads Nursing  
Supervisor and Infection  
Control Officer  
David Lawrence Centers  
for Behavioral Health