

Utah County Employee of the Month, August 2015

Lisa Guerra - Public Health Nurse Coordinator

Utah County Health Department

This employee has been on television for the health department. She has been slandered by the media. She is the grand-daughter of a once-famous movie star. Her nephew is an international radio host.

In partnership with the Utah County Health Department she originally did women's cancer screening at Mountainlands Community Health Center before joining us at the health department 16 years ago. Initially, Lisa Guerra continued as a nurse in cancer screening. Then she moved to epidemiology where she has investigated everything from the finer points of diarrheal illness and sexually transmitted infections, to anthrax.

In her personal life, Lisa is the mother of 5 (3 boys and 2 girls). She married a native Panamanian in Panama, obviously speaks Spanish fluently, and prides herself on her tamales. She has a great sense of humor that is not always understood, like the day she sent a department-wide email stating that she would be leaving with her husband to serve as a mission president in Panama. Finally, she had to tell people, "Did you notice when I sent that?" It was April Fools, but many people were sad she would be leaving.

Lisa is fun to work with and makes life fun for those she works with. She represents the County well in her role as epidemiology coordinator. She is very thorough in working with school nurses and teachers and parents to control pertussis or whooping cough cases in the schools and in the community. She is dedicated and committed to excellence and makes sure we communicate well with school staff and parents.

On a Saturday at the end of last year, Ralph received a call on our emergency phone telling us to call a pediatrician, Dr. Hacking, regarding potential measles cases. Lisa was notified quickly that Saturday and immediately investigated the cases and confirmed that it was indeed measles. Lisa, working with State epidemiologists, contacted the family that Saturday and worked all weekend identifying potential contacts. She worked many long hours on consecutive weekends and long days to identify and quarantine affected individuals. She was resourceful and with the cooperation of other department staff and the State staff contacted hundreds of people to determine exposure and susceptibility status to recommend quarantine when applicable. Almost 400 individuals were determined to be exposed in Utah and potentially susceptible to measles infection. Lisa professionally and compassionately addressed resident concerns of those involved which included several home visits to see and test individuals at home.. Due to her efforts and the work of others, Utah County limited the number of additional cases to just one close contact of the original two cases.

It is with full enthusiasm that we nominate Lisa Guerra as Employee of month for August, 2015.

Nominated by Steve Mickelson and Dr. Joseph Miner

Picture courtesy of Mike Stansfield