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CDI IN BLOOM | **acdis 2023**
MAY 8–11, 2023



2023 ACDIS Achievement Awards

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About the ACDIS Achievement Awards

Celebrating Achievement

- Honor excellence in the CDI profession
- Advance CDI best practices
- Promote improvement and development

Recipients are nominated by their peers and selected by the ACDIS Events Committee.

2023 honors:

- Melissa Varnavas Spirit of CDI
- Rookie of the Year
- Excellence in Provider Engagement
- Recognition of CDI Professional Achievement
- CDI Professional of the Year
- Diversity in CDI

Melissa Varnavas Spirit of CDI Award

- ... led the first annual networking events even prior to the inception of CDI week
- ... encourages everyone to volunteer and be passionate about our chosen profession
- ... continues to be a resource for his peers, a very humble CDI leader
- ... a pleasure to work with, loved by his staff, and a great leader
- ... his name is almost synonymous with CDI

“He is the face of CDI and ACDIS in California ... his CDI passion is contagious!”

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Melissa Varnavas Spirit of CDI Award Recipient: *Romerl Cris Gumayagay, MD, CCDS, CDIP, CCS, CRCR*



- CDI manager at NYU Langone Health System
- More than 16 years of experience in CDI
- Areas of expertise also include case management, healthcare compliance, clinical revenue integrity, and quality
- Longest-serving member of the California ACDIS local chapter leadership team (since 2010)
- ACDIS member and inaugural member of the ACDIS Leadership Council
- Active member of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)

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Rookie of the Year Award

- ... quickly learned how to conduct a review of the record, format an accurate and compliant query, identify the appropriate code assignment, and assign MS and APR-DRGs
- ... within the first 6 months, her metrics were exceeding her peers as well as some of our long standing tenured CDSs
- ... is comfortable and proficient in her interactions with clinicians
- ... her manager continually espouses her contributions to team cohesiveness and collaboration

“She also demonstrates professionalism and interest in promoting the overall advancement of the CDI program at her site and in our hospital system.”

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Rookie of the Year Award Recipient: *Patty Robles, BSN, RN*



- Clinical documentation specialist at Advocate Aurora Health in Illinois for 1.5 years
- Previously worked in the emergency department at Mercy Hospital for 8 years, first as a nurse collegiate and then as a nurse
- Discovered her passion for reviewing charts while involved in the Restraint Committee, which audited charts for proper restraint documentation
- Currently studying for the CCDS exam and hopes to sit for it once she has the requisite experience

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Excellence in Provider Engagement Award

- ... an asset to our outpatient CDI department
- ... went above and beyond in educating providers
- ... a good mentor for new employees
- ... always willing to take on a challenge [and] comes up with creative and unique solutions for any challenge she faces
- ... [providers] feel comfortable coming to her with questions about diagnoses and queries
- ... her biggest strength is the ability to handle multiple priorities at once

**“She is also
compassionate and
caring ... and is
capable of
communicating
clearly, even when
having difficult
conversations with
staff and physicians.”**

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Excellence in Provider Engagement Award Recipient: *Melissa Brawley, RN, BSN, CCDS-O, CRC*



- Certified clinical documentation specialist at Atrium Wake Forest Baptist in North Carolina
- Joined the outpatient CDI department in 2019
- 25 years of experience as a nurse, including experience in the trauma ICU, the medical ICU, regional anesthesia, research, and oncology
- Has presented to the North Carolina ACDIS Local Chapter
- Developed an approach to educating the new providers in the clinics that she covers

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Recognition of CDI Professional Achievement Award

- always ready to help and is easily accessible... professional, empathetic, and understanding
- ... passionate about CDI innovation, team development, healthcare quality, and an advocate for diversity
- ... holds ethics and integrity at the forefront of everything she does and requires the same from our CDI team, physicians, and senior leadership
- ... embraces learning, always increasing her own education and instilling growth in others
- ... leads by example and no matter her title, she's always willing to jump in and help
- ... ushers in a calming, reassuring mood

“The high level of engagement and overwhelming positive results reflect her strong leadership in an extremely diverse department.”

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Recognition of CDI Professional Achievement Award Recipient: *Tiara L. Minor, RN, BSN, CCDS*



- Senior manager of CDI at University of Miami Health System in Florida
- Nine years of CDI experience
- Under her leadership, the query response agreement rate increased from 60% to 89%
- Member of the ACDIS Leadership Council and Texas ACDIS local chapter
- Contributed articles to ACDIS' *CDI Journal*
- Belongs to the team that won the 2022 Diversity in CDI ACDIS Achievement Award

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CDI Professional of the Year Award

- ... believes strongly in a high-level of advocacy and education
- ... always makes time for her team without rush or haste
- ... works side-by-side with her staff to promote individual growth and development
- ... welcomes her team "stepping out of their comfort zones" to learn and grow their CDI profession
- ... continues to work with system vendors, physician advisors, and leadership teams to optimize documentation, prioritization review, and workflow processes
- ... reaches across the silos of coding, CDI, and quality daily

"She continues to excel through every challenge and leads by example with integrity and passion."

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CDI Professional of the Year Award Recipient: *Lori Ganote, MSN, RN, CCDS*



- Director of inpatient CDI at Baptist Health Systems of Kentucky and Southern Indiana
- Master's degree in nursing education
- Began her career in CDI In 2013 and obtained her CCDS in 2015
- Worked with leadership executives and human resources to expand the CDI department
- Member of ACDIS, ACDIS' CDI educators networking group, and the ACDIS Leadership Council
- Past vice president of the Kentucky/Southern Indiana ACDIS local chapter; past treasurer of the Indiana ACDIS local chapter; past presenter at ACDIS conferences and local chapter meetings

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Diversity in CDI Award Recipient:



- Diversity across the team through ethnicity, race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, and educational background (e.g., clinicians and non-clinicians)
- Approximately 50% of staff members and leadership team are minorities
- CDI team composed of coders, RNs with doctoral degrees, and physicians
- Implemented programming to build cultural competency and increase awareness
- Launched Business Resource groups in 2022 to enhance opportunities for recruitment, retention, and growth:
 - Minority physicians
 - LGBTQIA
 - African American/Black
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Military/Veteran

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Diversity in CDI Award Recipient:



- Employs native language interpreters (including Spanish, Mandarin, and American Sign Language) to better serve patients and their families
- Opened a family medicine practice in 2019 providing specialized services to people who identify as LGBTQ+
- “We have a mutual respect for our unique personalities, clinical experiences, and utilize these to facilitate trust and a productive work environment.”

Accepted By

Faisal Hussain, MD, MHIIM, RHIA, CCDS, CDIP, CCS, Executive Director, CDI
Diana Gueits, MBA, CDP, Executive Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging