

MRHA Emerging Rural Health Leader Award

Each year, Minnesota Rural Health Association acknowledges an individual who has emerged as “leading the charge” to improve rural health on a local, regional, or statewide level.

Congratulations to 2025 Award recipient:



Ranita Bothun

Chief Operating Officer
Appleton Area Health

Ranita is the Chief Operating Officer at Appleton Area Health. With over ten years of experience as an LPN and RN in surgery, clinic, hospital, and care center settings, she is deeply committed to delivering high-quality patient care and fostering professional growth among healthcare staff.

Growing up in rural Minnesota, Ranita developed a strong appreciation for the unique challenges faced by small communities, especially when it comes to accessing quality healthcare. Rural health presents distinct obstacles such as limited resources, provider shortages, and geographic barriers, all of which require creative solutions and dedicated leadership.

She is passionate about helping people and advocating for improved healthcare services in rural areas. At Appleton Area Health, Ranita has led initiatives including a community wellness program and staff retention programs, both designed to support the well-being of our residents and ensure that our team remains engaged and motivated. Ranita states “I am especially dedicated to addressing provider recruitment and retention, recognizing how vital it is to ensure that rural communities have access to skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals”.

Ranita was nominated by Greg Miner, CEO at Appleton Area Health. Mr. Miner shared the following about Ranita: “Ranita exemplifies the qualities of an emerging leader in rural health, demonstrating exceptional commitment, innovation, and leadership in improving health care access and outcomes for rural Minnesotans.

Ranita Bothun is the Chief Operating Officer with Appleton Area Health. Ranita has been instrumental in the delivery of care at Appleton Area Health.

Ranita most recently has led the opening of a clinic in a community that hasn't had access to healthcare for over 5 years. Her leadership has ensured that this underserved community receives healthcare locally. In addition, Ranita has led efforts to make Appleton Area Health, for three years in a row, one of Modern Healthcare's Best Places to Work in the Nation. She continues to mentor new employees and prospective nurses who are looking for a career in nursing. Ranita is the modern-day Florence Nightengale of the 21st century devoted to rural healthcare during her career path.”

In conjunction with National Rural Health Day, we celebrate Ranita and the work she does as the “Power of Rural”.