



## **COVID-19 Communication Takes Center Stage at Statewide Event Highlighting the Best Public Relations Work in Alaska**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Videos featuring health caregivers from diverse backgrounds sharing why they received the vaccine and an internal campaign focused on COVID-19 vaccinations earned top honors from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Alaska chapter in a [virtual Aurora Awards broadcast](#) Wednesday afternoon. Additionally, three public relations practitioners were recognized for their roles in demonstrating exemplary skills and advancing the profession in Alaska.

PRSA proclaims that the essential components of public relations are research, planning, execution and evaluation. The annual Aurora Awards recognize Alaska-based individuals and teams who best execute those components in their diverse work across the state. Entries are judged by PRSA members from outside Alaska – this year by the Central Iowa chapter.

Awards were presented in 26 categories, including three special honors: the Grand Award of Excellence, the Grand Aurora Award and APRs' Choice. In addition to recognizing public relations and communications campaigns, tactics and tools, three Alaska practitioners were honored for their exemplary work.

### **Grand Award of Excellence – *recognizing an exemplary tactic or tool***

*Providence Health & Services Alaska – Video Material*

A series of videos developed to share facts about the COVID-19 vaccine addressed vaccine hesitancy among caregivers and supported the state's vaccination efforts in the broader community. The videos, created by Providence Health & Services Alaska, used research to inform their messaging that featured caregivers from diverse backgrounds sharing why they received the vaccine.

### **Grand Aurora Award – *recognizing an exemplary campaign***

*Providence Health & Services Alaska – Internal Communication*

As Providence Health & Services Alaska anticipated FDA approval for emergency use of the first COVID-19 vaccine, the health care system knew providing accurate and timely information about the vaccine's safety and efficacy from trusted sources would be critical as its caregivers decided whether to be inoculated. A 2021 campaign to address vaccine hesitancy resulted in participation rates that exceeded expectations.

**APRs' Choice – favorite campaign as voted on by Alaskans accredited in public relations**

*Providence Health & Services Alaska – Internal Communication*

The APRs' Choice Award provides the opportunity for Alaska's public relations professionals holding the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) designation to vote for their favorite campaign, a twist on a People's Choice Award. Providence Health & Services Alaska's internal communication about COVID-19 vaccinations was selected to receive the 2021 APRs' Choice Award.

**Bruce Pozzi Chapter Service Award**

*Heather Cavanaugh, APR, director of external affairs and corporate communications, Alaska Communications.*

This award is given to a member whose service to the Alaska Chapter has been significantly above and beyond expectations during the previous year(s) of service. The award is named for the chapter's first president, Bruce Pozzi, APR, Fellow PRSA. Cavanaugh was recognized for her mentorship and support of public relations practitioners across the state, as well as her willingness to help in a variety of roles, often under the radar and out of the spotlight.

**PRSA Alaska 2021 Communicator of the Year**

*Kirsten Schultz, chief communication officer, Providence Health & Services Alaska*

This award is the Alaska Chapter's highest individual award. It is given to a member who has made significant contributions to the public relations profession and the community over the past year. The award is given based upon a clear demonstration of work in the following areas: achievements, application, accomplishments, service to other organizations, service to the Public Relations Society of America.

**Vivian Hamilton Professional Promise Award**

*Kelsey Fielder, account manager, Thompson & Co. Public Relations*

This award recognizes an outstanding young chapter member who shows exceptional promise in the field and in chapter activities and leadership. Fielder was honored for demonstrating her passion for the public relations field, upholding high professional standards, and proving her commitment to advancing in the field every day.

First place awards were presented in the following categories:

*Awards of Excellence – tactics and tools*

- **Internal Publication** – Alaska Pacific University
- **Media Relations** – Northwest Fish, McKinley Capital Management LLC, RRG Capital Management LLC and Thompson & Co. Public Relations
- **Radio Material** – Carlile Transportation and Yuit Communications
- **Social Media** – GCI

- **Special Electronic and Printed Promotional Materials** – GCI
- **Video Material** – Providence Health & Services Alaska
- **Website** – Missile Defense Agency, Department of the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration in Alaska and HDR
- **Writing Portfolio** – Heather Marron, Alaska Communications

*Aurora Awards - campaigns*

- **Crisis Communications** – University of Alaska Fairbanks
- **Events and Observances (seven or fewer days)** – GCI
- **Integrated Communications** – Mat-Su Health Foundation and HDR
- **Internal Communications** – Providence Health & Services Alaska
- **Marketing Communications** – Thompson & Co. Public Relations
- **Multicultural Public Relations** – Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Thompson & Co. Public Relations and Blueprint Alaska
- **Public Affairs** – Alaska Oil and Gas Association, Bright Media and Communications, and Blueprint Alaska
- **Public Service** – Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and HDR

**About PRSA Alaska**

*Established in 1976, the PRSA Alaska Chapter connects communications professionals working in the Last Frontier. Today, PRSA Alaska includes more than 150 members statewide, providing public relations practitioners and communicators with monthly luncheons, professional development seminars, webinars, career postings, education, awards recognition, accreditation preparation and more. Learn more about PRSA Alaska by visiting [www.prsaalaska.org](http://www.prsaalaska.org).*

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