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Fayetteville NC VA nurse receives North Carolina Nurses Association honor

FAYETTEVILLE, NC –Jermecka Covington, a Fayetteville NC VA Coastal Health Care System registered nurse, has been named the 2021 Rookie of The Year by the North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA).

The annual award is given by the NCNA board of directors to a nurse who has been an association member less than two years and excels at promoting a positive image of nursing and the professional organization to peers and consumers. She was honored at an awards luncheon during the NCNA 114th annual convention in Concord in September.

“It’s a very humbling experience,” Covington said about winning the award. “Receiving such a prestigious award, allowed me the opportunity to reflect over the many obstacles that God has equipped me to overcome. Also, I thought about the opportunity I have to impact Veterans [patients] and my students through my dedication and commitment to the nursing profession.”

Covington established herself as someone other nurses look towards for leadership, advice, and support. Until 2020, however, she had not been an NCNA member. When membership was suggested at a faculty meeting, she jumped in with both feet and soon had joined the South Central Advisory Committee, organized a regional event, was showing up at the NC General Assembly to support the SAVE Act, and had written a letter to the editor on the same issue, all while continuing to expand her volunteering in the community, the NCNA wrote in its press release announcing the award.

Until recently, Covington worked as the lead RN under the Chief of Staff assisting with the Referral Coordination Initiative. Now her attention is focused on caring for COVID patients at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. She is also adjunct nursing faculty at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke.

“I wanted to work at the VA because this gives me an opportunity to give back to those who served our country,” she said. “Nursing is my passion and my calling. It’s what I have strived to be since the age of 11, when my mother stated that I would make a great nurse. My hope is that nurses like myself will continue to be valued each day.”

According to Debra Young, Associate Director of Patient Care Services, having a member of the Fayetteville nursing staff being recognized by the association says a lot about the caliber of nurses the VA seeks to attract. “Nursing is a calling and nurses like Ms. Covington are vital to ensuring that we fulfill our mission of caring for the men and women who have given so much to this nation.”

For more information about the Fayetteville NC VA Coastal Health Care System visit, www.va.gov/fayetteville-coastal-health-care.

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