**Nomination for NP of the Year: Kathleen (Katie) Baccus**

I am honored to nominate Kathleen (Katie) Baccus for NP of the Year. Katie is a remarkable Nurse Practitioner whose work focuses on patients with spinal cord injuries, head injuries, and those in an inpatient rehabilitation setting. Her commitment to patient care is not just exceptional—it’s transformative. Katie’s patients often face severe physical and cognitive deficits, but she meets these challenges with a steadfast dedication that goes far beyond the expected.

Katie devotes countless hours to ensure each patient receives comprehensive, individualized care. She meticulously coordinates all aspects of their treatment, working with physicians, therapists, nurses, and discharge planners to guarantee a seamless transition from acute care to rehabilitation. Her deep understanding of each patient’s unique needs allows her to advocate for them effectively, ensuring they receive the appropriate therapy, medical interventions, and emotional support to achieve the best possible outcomes.

In her role, Katie is known for going the extra mile. She doesn’t just manage the clinical side—she becomes an integral part of her patients' recovery journeys. Katie listens carefully to their concerns, spends extra time educating them and their families about their conditions, and makes sure they feel supported at every step. She is always thinking ahead, anticipating potential barriers to progress, and proactively addressing them to optimize recovery. Her patients, many of whom face life-altering challenges, benefit immensely from her commitment to ensuring they regain as much function and independence as possible.

Katie’s compassionate approach shines in the way she inspires hope and positivity in her patients, even in the most difficult circumstances. She is not only a highly skilled healthcare provider but also a source of emotional strength for those in her care. Her ability to blend clinical expertise with genuine empathy makes her an irreplaceable asset to her patients and their families. Katie’s unwavering dedication means her patients feel seen, valued, and empowered, which is critical to their overall healing process.

Moreover, Katie doesn’t just stop at direct patient care. She bridges the gap between the acute care setting and the rehabilitation environment, ensuring that her patients have a smooth and well-coordinated continuum of care. Whether it’s through close communication with hospital teams or by working with insurance companies to ensure access to needed services, Katie is relentless in her pursuit of the best care for her patients. She navigates these complexities with grace, ensuring that nothing stands in the way of her patients receiving the therapy, support, and resources they need.

In addition to her already demanding clinical responsibilities, Katie dedicates significant time to educating the next generation of healthcare providers. She precepts NP students and takes an active role in mentoring them, offering hands-on learning experiences in the field of rehabilitation. She also contributes to the training of new physicians in TTUHSC’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation program, shaping the future of this critical specialty. Her natural leadership abilities and her commitment to education have earned her the utmost respect from her colleagues and the broader healthcare community.

In every sense, Katie exemplifies what it means to be a compassionate, skilled, and dedicated Nurse Practitioner. Her patients are truly blessed to have someone who fights for their well-being every step of the way. For these reasons, I believe Kathleen Baccus is an outstanding candidate for NP of the Year.

Respectfully,

Tabra Wischkaemper, FPN-C