Tom Conway, RN – Rehab, Cypress Rehabilitation Hospital
Nominated by: Mary Sisto, RN – Nurse Manager, Rehab, Cypress Rehabilitation Hospital

Tom has been an employee for KDHCD since June of 1997. He worked as an LVN in Transitional Care and Rehab before beginning his studies to complete his RN. Tom worked with the Float Pool while finishing school, and finally found his home as an RN back with the rehab team. In fact, when he passed his RN boards, a steady stream of Rehab staff came to my office to let me know that he was "the one" for the job. Each had a story to tell of ways that Tom had supported our rehab team, even while working for other departments! He began his RN career at Rehab in Jan. of 2009.

Tom is always ready to support the team with an extra shift, a pair of hands in the moment, an encouraging word to a colleague, and even just a dose of common sense when needed. His level head and even disposition helps to keep the team on course and patient focused. Tom embodies the message of "yes, I can do that; yes, I can change; and yes, I can help." As a relatively new RN, Tom is very self-directed in his learning. He is constantly seeking out greater understanding of his practice and new knowledge. He has been ready and willing to help with any project that might benefit the department and improve quality care. An important project that Tom is currently helping with is the documentation re-design for Acute Rehab.

Tom was one of the first to step up to the plate when we opened the new Short Stay Unit. He paired his past learning in long-term care with his personal commitment to learn, helping us to launch a venture that is still being grown! He continues to be one of staff leaders in this important initiative. Tom helped to bring our first "Rehab Reunion" to reality. He was involved in the planning, volunteer recruitment and set up. On the day of the event, he was ready with a smile and an activity that he kept running during the whole day! This hallmark event brought Rehab into the community awareness, celebrated our patients and team, and inspired all of us to keep our focus on the persons we serve and the work that we do.

Tom has recently agreed to step up as our Kaweah Care Team member for the night shift. Because his is a clear example of "walking the walk," his is recognized as both an expert and inspiration to our department. Everyone is ready to hear and receive his message (which is always conveyed with affection, and sometimes with a grain of salt!) Tom has only been "officially" with us as a Rehab RN for about a year now. He has already made his mark on our work, our practice, and our professional community here. It is already difficult for me to imaging our department without him. –And I hope that he is always a member of the team!