

Award Writing Collection

Ghostwritten Nominations — Regional, State and National
Recognition Programs

Portfolio Work Sample — Liz Sahadi Smith

Collection

Institutional Voice

Engagement Type

Ghostwritten & Authored Award Nominations, Multiple Programs

Programs

- Phoenix Business Journal Healthcare Heroes
- Phoenix Business Journal Most Admired Leaders
- State Community Health Center Association Innovation Award
- ACE Awards – Innovator of the Year
- Women Achievers of Arizona – Arizona Capitol Times
- National Community Health Access Fellowship

Combined Outcome

5 wins or finalist placements from 6 submissions

How to Read This Piece

Work Submission

This is a collection of original ghostwritten award nominations submitted across regional, state and national recognition programs between 2024 and 2025. Each is presented with its strategic notes and submitted text.

What This Shows

- Competitive award strategy
- Multi-audience nomination architecture
- Clinical voice adoption for business-audience judges
- Narrative compression under strict word limits
- The discipline of building a single sustained argument rather than cataloguing accomplishments
- The advisory capacity to identify the winning angle before drafting begins

Award Writing as a Strategic Discipline

The 91% award win rate cited in this portfolio – 20 wins from 22 submissions – is not a writing result. It is a strategy result. The writing executes the strategy. The strategy determines what the submission argues, which credential or innovation leads, which data point anchors the case and what the submission does not include.

Award writing for a business publication audience is different from award writing for a clinical association audience. Both require compression and specificity. The PBJ audience measures impact in operational scale and community visibility. The clinical association audience measures impact in patient outcomes and replicable innovation. The same nomination written for one panel would fail with the other. Every submission in this collection was written specifically for its audience.

Business Publication Audience

Measures impact in **operational scale** and **community visibility**

Clinical Association Audience

Measures impact in **patient outcomes** and **replicable innovation**

Healthcare Heroes Award

Program

Phoenix Business Journal Healthcare Heroes,
Nursing Category

Client

Street Medicine Nurse Practitioner, Phoenix,
Ariz.

Submitted

2024

Outcome

Finalist, Nursing Category

Strategic Notes

The submission strategy centered on one clinical innovation – field IV hydration – as the organizing proof point for all four nomination sections. Rather than presenting a broad list of accomplishments, the nomination builds a single, specific, data-anchored argument: this clinician identified a gap no one else was filling, designed a field-deployable solution and implemented it for a population with no other safety net.

The 2023 Maricopa County heat death figure – **645 deaths** – grounds the intervention in documented public health consequence, not abstract compassion.

Healthcare Heroes — Submitted Nomination

Personal Bio

The nominee is the Lead Nurse Practitioner of the Street Medicine Central Team at this healthcare nonprofit. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner degree and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from accredited Arizona institutions. She has been in her current position since June 2023 and has worked in the healthcare industry for more than eight years. Prior to joining the organization, she served as a Family Nurse Practitioner at a regional safety-net health system's psychiatry hospital and as a Registered Nurse at a regional safety-net health system medical center, a specialty orthopedic practice and an ambulatory surgery center.

Why the Nominee Is a Hero

The nominee has dedicated her career to serving the most vulnerable populations in her community. As the provider of the Street Medicine Central Team, she delivers compassionate, evidence-based care to individuals experiencing homelessness across Phoenix. Recognizing the acute need for hydration among unsheltered individuals during Phoenix summers, she pioneered field-administered IV hydration for patients encountered by her team in encampments, riverbeds and sidewalk settings. That intervention is now a frontline tool for preventing heat-related illness and death in a county where extreme heat claimed **645 lives in 2023 alone**. Her commitment to meeting patients in the physical and emotional conditions she finds them — not the conditions a clinic requires — has been central to building trust with a population that has historically avoided or been turned away from traditional care. Her ability to design practical solutions to complex clinical access problems has made her a model for street medicine providers nationally.

Improving Patient Experience

The nominee has made significant strides in improving the patient experience for individuals experiencing homelessness by eliminating the primary barrier most interventions never address: location. By bringing care directly to patients through street medicine, she created a setting where individuals feel heard, respected and safe — often for the first time in their interactions with the healthcare system. Her approach, built on genuine relationship rather than transactional encounter, has measurably increased engagement with ongoing healthcare services among a population for whom trust is a precondition for care. Her field IV hydration program represents that same patient-experience logic applied to acute intervention: rather than directing patients to emergency departments for a preventable condition, she delivers the intervention where the patient already is.

Making a Difference in Nursing

The nominee's most significant contribution to the field of nursing has been demonstrating what street medicine can do when a skilled clinician is given the autonomy to redesign care delivery from the ground up. Her field IV hydration program addressed a specific clinical gap: oral hydration is frequently insufficient to prevent heat-related illness in unsheltered patients who are already severely dehydrated by the time a street medicine team reaches them. By training her team to administer IV fluids in the field, she reduced preventable emergency department utilization and extended the team's capacity to intervene before a heat emergency becomes fatal — in a county where **645 people died of heat-related causes in 2023**. Under her clinical leadership, the Street Medicine Central Team expanded its diagnostic capability to include field phlebotomy — drawing blood in the field to obtain diagnostic information that would otherwise require patients to navigate clinic access they often cannot or will not attempt.

Most Admired Leaders Award

Program

Phoenix Business Journal Most Admired Leaders

Client

Executive Leader, Healthcare Nonprofit, Phoenix, Ariz.

Submitted

2024

Outcome

Finalist. Featured in the Phoenix Business Journal special report and recognized at the 15th Annual Most Admired Leaders Awards program, May 2024.

Format Constraints

Four essay sections – 200 to 250 words for bio, 150 words each for remaining sections. No bulleted lists permitted.

Strategic Notes

The PBJ Most Admired Leaders program evaluates leadership across four distinct dimensions, each with its own word count ceiling. The strategic challenge is not filling the word count – it is making each section feel complete and specific at 150 words, which leaves no room for abstract praise.

Every section was anchored to a concrete example:

- The expansion and the funding for **leadership**
- Specific board roles for **community engagement**
- Named internal programs (JEDI committee, Employee Wellness Committee) for **culture**

The nomination guidelines explicitly prohibit lists, requiring sustained prose argument.

Most Admired Leaders — Submitted Nomination

Personal Bio

The nominee is an Executive Officer of this healthcare nonprofit, a position she has held for three years. In her eight years with this Phoenix-based nonprofit, she has advanced its founding vision of providing compassionate healthcare to individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Maricopa County. With more than 40 years of experience as a registered nurse, she has demonstrated sustained commitment to healthcare excellence across diverse roles. She spent a decade in leadership positions at a major Phoenix hospital system, ultimately serving as Associate Administrator with oversight across multiple departments at two hospitals. Under her leadership, the organization has grown to serve more than **7,000 individuals experiencing homelessness annually**, completing more than **54,000 medical visits** through a staff and volunteer network of more than 250. She has been instrumental in launching the organization's inaugural East Valley respite center, slated to open later in the year.

Strong Leadership

The nominee's leadership is most evident in the years-long effort to establish a medical facility in the East Valley. She built relationships with city and county governmental agencies over time – a process that required sustained presence, authentic engagement and patience with regulatory complexity – ultimately securing a **record-breaking [amount redacted] county grant in 2023**. Her approach throughout was transparent and people-centered, creating a team dynamic capable of navigating intricate permitting and land acquisition processes without losing momentum. She remained involved in every detail, from site negotiation to compliance requirements, while holding space for the team to lead in their areas of expertise. The East Valley center's future opening represents not only the completion of a major capital project but the delivery of critical care access to one of the county's most underserved communities. It is the direct result of a leadership style built on relationships, tenacity and clarity of purpose.

Community Involvement

The nominee understands that healthcare leadership in Phoenix requires sustained engagement beyond the organization's own walls. She is actively involved with regional partners and collaborates with municipal stakeholders including the city to advance the organization's mission across the county. At the national level, she serves on a National Board and as Vice Chair for a fitness-based nonprofit, where she contributes to strategies for expanding care delivery models in underserved communities. Her relationship-building with policymakers, business leaders and community advocates has helped establish this healthcare nonprofit as a credible and trusted institutional voice in conversations about medical respite, street medicine and supportive services across the region. Her engagement philosophy is grounded in the belief that lasting impact requires presence and partnership, not proximity.

Positive Impact on Company Culture

The nominee has shaped this healthcare nonprofit's culture by building systems that reflect the same values the organization brings to patient care. In 2023, she initiated internal committees including a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion group and a Trauma-Informed Care group – creating structured spaces for staff to develop shared understanding and organizational resilience. She expanded the organization's wellness programming through an Employee Wellness Committee that addresses daily stressors and supports healthy work-life integration. New initiatives including exercise incentives, mentorship programming and self-care resources have been adopted across the organization, with senior leadership participating directly. That visible commitment matters: when leadership models the behaviors it asks of staff, participation follows. Program engagement has risen organization-wide under her leadership, reflecting a culture where the well-being of staff is understood as directly connected to the quality of care the organization delivers to patients.

State Community Health Center Association Innovation Award

Program

State Community Health Center Association
Innovation Award

Client

Street Medicine Nurse Practitioner, Phoenix,
Ariz.

Submitted

2025

Character Limit

2,499

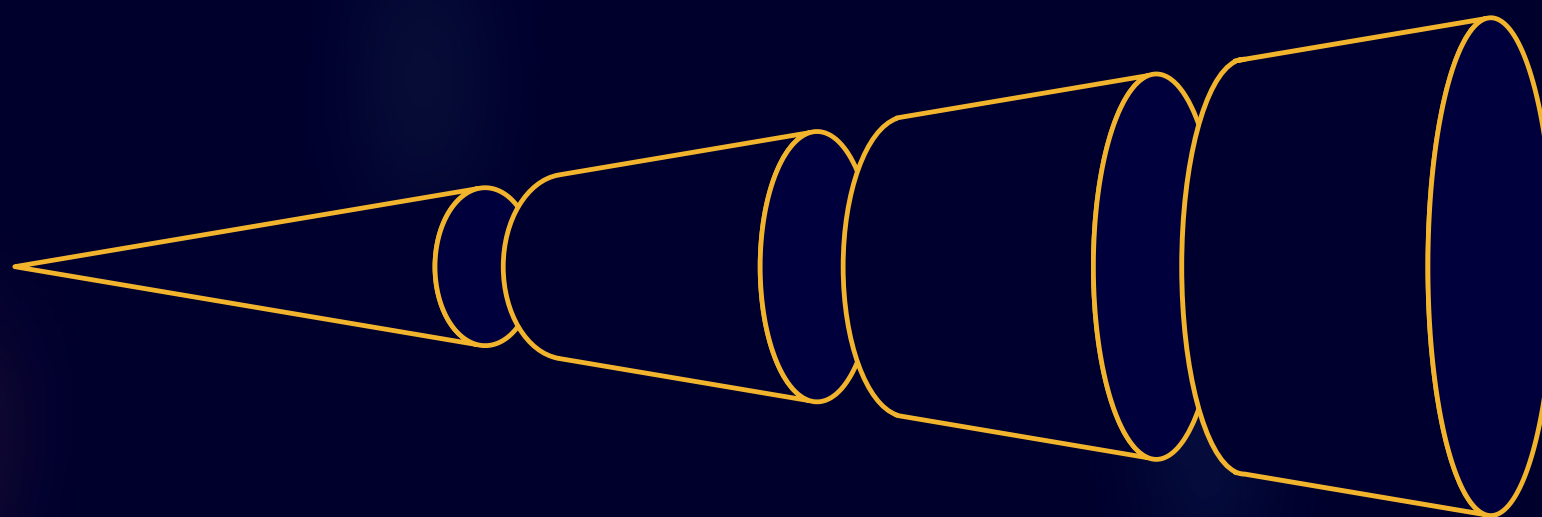
Outcome

Won. Award presented at the State
Community Health Center Association Annual
Conference, April 9, 2025.

Strategic Notes

This submission had one job: make a clinical innovation legible to a non-clinical panel in under 2,500 characters. The strategy was to open with a single, shocking data point – **645 heat deaths, 170-degree asphalt** – to establish stakes immediately, then demonstrate the innovation's logic in sequence: problem, solution, measurable result, scalability.

The "**backpack healthcare model**" framing was deliberate – it gives evaluators a durable mental image that communicates portability, resourcefulness and replicability in three words. The submission avoided listing credentials and stayed entirely in the domain of documented impact.



The submission's narrative arc moves from documented crisis to replicable solution – a structure designed to make clinical innovation legible to a non-clinical panel under strict character constraints.

Innovation Award — Submitted Nomination

The nominee's innovative approach to street medicine has transformed healthcare delivery for Phoenix's unsheltered population. As the lead provider of a Medical Team, she has pioneered solutions that save lives and change how accessible healthcare works for the community's most vulnerable members.

The field IV hydration program is at the center of her innovations. After witnessing the devastating impact of heat-related deaths in Maricopa County — **645 lives lost in one year alone** — she recognized that traditional approaches were not sufficient. She developed and implemented a first-of-its-kind program to deliver IV fluids directly on the streets, bringing hospital-grade intervention to people who cannot or will not seek traditional medical care. This innovation is essential given Phoenix's extreme temperatures, where **asphalt can reach 170 degrees**, putting unsheltered residents at severe risk.

She also transformed street medicine by introducing mobile blood-drawing capabilities — a service typically confined to clinical settings. The impact is immediate and measurable: faster diagnoses, better treatment plans, fewer emergency room visits.

- ✔ What makes these innovations significant is their scalability. Her **backpack healthcare model** serves as a blueprint for other communities facing similar challenges. She has demonstrated that high-quality care can be delivered effectively outside traditional healthcare settings — a replicable model that other organizations are now studying and adapting.

The measurable impact is evident in both individual outcomes and system-wide improvements. Her team regularly prevents heat-related hospitalizations through proactive intervention, manages chronic conditions that would otherwise result in emergency department visits and builds trust with patients who have historically avoided medical care. This upstream approach reduces the burden on emergency systems while extending care to people it would not otherwise reach.

Her innovations extend beyond medical procedures. She has established a new standard for patient engagement — proving that healthcare can and should meet people exactly where they are, whether in river bottoms, canals or street corners. That approach has improved patient compliance and outcomes in ways a clinic-based model cannot replicate.

ACE Awards — Innovator of the Year

Program

ACE Awards, Innovator of the Year Category

Client

Healthcare Nonprofit, Phoenix, Ariz.

Submitted

2024

Outcome

Finalist. Featured in the ACE Awards program in its 32nd year — the premier business awards recognition event for private and nonprofit organizations in the Phoenix metro.

Strategic Notes

This nomination had two distinct writing challenges:

- The **company profile and executive bio** required factual density — specific program counts, bed numbers, visit volumes, tenure details — organized for a business audience evaluating scale and operational credibility, not clinical outcome.
- The **Innovator of the Year narrative** required the opposite: a 400-word argument anchored to one innovation — field IV hydration — while still conveying the organization's full service continuum.

The IV hydration program was the right lead because it had a number: **645 heat deaths in Maricopa County, a 52% year-over-year increase**, that gave the innovation immediate, measurable context.

ACE Awards — Submitted Nomination

Company Profile

This healthcare nonprofit, headquartered in Phoenix, was established in 2008 by a physician committed to providing compassionate care to individuals experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County. The organization's CEO leads alongside the Chief Medical Officer, guiding a team of 200+ dedicated employees. The organization operates healthcare facilities and outreach teams throughout Maricopa County – two respite centers, each with xx beds and structured as mini-hospitals, and two fixed-site health centers offering primary care services. Multiple medical outreach teams extend comprehensive healthcare access across the county.

Driven by its mission to provide innovative healthcare solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness, the organization delivers primary healthcare, mobile medical outreach, medical respite care, hospital-based health navigation and street medicine services, along with wrap-around services addressing patients' social needs, including ID assistance, health insurance enrollment and transportation.

In 2023, the organization completed more than **54,000 medical visits**, reducing emergency room visits and hospital readmissions while easing pressure on the broader healthcare system. In response to the **52% rise in heat-related deaths** in Maricopa County – 645 deaths in 2023 alone – street medicine teams launched a field IV hydration program to prevent heat-related illness and death before it reaches the emergency department.

Innovator of the Year — Why This Organization Is Deserving

This healthcare nonprofit's work in healthcare delivery represents genuine innovation – not as a marketing claim, but as a documented operational reality. The field IV hydration program, launched in direct response to the surge in heat-related deaths in Maricopa County, is the clearest example. In 2023, **645 people died of heat-related causes in the county – a 52% increase from the prior year**. Street medicine teams are now administering IV fluids directly on the streets, in encampments and in riverbeds, bringing hospital-grade intervention to people who cannot or will not access traditional care. The program prevents dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke before they become fatal – and before they become emergency department admissions.

The hospital navigation program addresses a different point of failure in the same population. Dedicated staff embedded within hospital systems create safe discharge plans, advocate for patients' healthcare needs during inpatient stays and coordinate access to medical services and community resources after discharge. For individuals experiencing homelessness, discharge without that support typically means rapid deterioration and readmission. The navigation program interrupts that cycle.

The broader continuum of care – primary care, medical respite, mobile outreach, street medicine and wrap-around social services – reflects an organizational commitment to designing services around the actual conditions of the population served, rather than requiring patients to adapt to institutional convenience. That design philosophy is the throughline across every innovation the organization has introduced.

The field IV hydration program, now studied by other organizations nationally, is one result of that commitment. It will not be the last.

National Community Health Access Fellowship

Program

National Community Health Access Fellowship

Nominee

Physician Assistant, Healthcare Nonprofit, Phoenix, Ariz.

Submitted by

Liz Sahadi Smith, Communications Manager

Outcome

Won. The nominee received the National Community Health Access Fellowship.

Strategic Notes

Fellowship nominations for clinical practitioners present a specific writing challenge: the nominator is not a clinician, but the audience is. The letter must demonstrate clinical credibility without overclaiming expertise the writer does not have. The solution is **specificity without jargon.**

Rather than writing that the nominee "provides exceptional patient care," this letter names the actual problem — patients who need temperature-sensitive medications but have no stable place to store them — and names the nominee's specific response to it. That detail is more persuasive than a general claim because it is verifiable and because it shows the writer actually knows the nominee's work, not just her title.

This is also the only nomination in this portfolio written from the author's own professional identity rather than ghostwritten for a subject. The voice here is **Liz Sahadi Smith's** — a communications manager making a genuine case for a clinical colleague she has observed closely.

Fellowship — Nomination Letter

Dear Selection Committee,


I am writing to nominate this physician assistant for the National Community Health Access Fellowship.

At this healthcare nonprofit, I have had the privilege of witnessing her extraordinary commitment to both patient care and mentorship. Her work at our Health Center is remarkable. She provides compassionate, innovative care to individuals facing homelessness in Phoenix's unforgiving climate. Her patients face unique challenges – from severe dehydration and heat-related illness to the complexities of managing chronic conditions without stable housing. She does not just treat symptoms. She problem-solves, finding creative ways to help patients store temperature-sensitive medications or manage sun sensitivity from necessary prescriptions.

What truly sets her apart is her dedication to mentorship. As a preceptor for clinical students from a regional Arizona university, she is shaping the future of healthcare. She does not just teach clinical skills – she instills the importance of empathy, adaptability and holistic care. Her students learn to see beyond immediate health concerns and understand the broader context of each patient's situation.

Her approach to healthcare is collaborative. She works closely with behavioral health providers, community health workers and other specialists to address the complex needs of her patients. This integrated approach improves health outcomes and serves as an excellent model for her students, demonstrating the importance of comprehensive, team-based care.

Her passion for advocacy further enhances her impact as a mentor. She consistently speaks up for her patients, working to secure additional resources and push for systemic changes. By modeling this commitment to advocacy, she inspires her students to become not just healthcare providers, but champions for their patients and communities.

 The challenges she faces are real. With homelessness rising in Phoenix, the need for compassionate, skilled healthcare providers has never been greater. Yet she remains committed, continuously seeking new ways to improve care and inspire the next generation of PAs.

This fellowship would not only recognize her outstanding contributions – it would support her ongoing efforts to mentor future PAs dedicated to serving underserved populations. It would enable her to develop her mentorship programs further and continue her impactful work in our community. She embodies the spirit of this fellowship. Her dedication to patient care and mentorship creates a ripple effect, equipping a new generation of PAs to address the complex health needs of vulnerable populations.

I wholeheartedly recommend her for this honor.

Sincerely, Liz Sahadi Smith

About Liz Sahadi Smith

Strategic communications executive with 25 years of experience architecting institutional narrative, governing AI-era brand reputation and building resilience infrastructure for organizations operating under high public scrutiny.

Narrative Arbitrage — Category Engineering

Engineered the climate-adaptive healthcare category to bypass political friction and generate **\$18M in earned media value**. The category was adopted by partner organizations statewide.

Algorithmic Brand Governance

Architects organizational Share of Model strategy, ensuring authoritative citation status in AI-generated outputs and governing how institutional reputation is synthesized across media and information platforms.

Resilience Architecture — Reputational De-risking

Designs crisis communications infrastructure that outlasts staff transitions and survives narrative hijacking. Built systems that achieved **143% positive sentiment across 113 consecutive days** of record heat and contributed to the first heat death decline in a decade.

Relational Capital Stewardship

Manages high-value media and institutional relationships as balance-sheet assets — PBS/WETA documentary feature, coverage in The New York Times, Reuters, AP, NPR, BBC and Politico. **91% award win rate — 20 wins from 22 submissions.**

lizsahadismith.com

Liz Sahadi Smith — Strategic Communications — Phoenix, Ariz.