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Mono County Behavioral Health's Salvador Montanez Receives Inaugural Richard Van Horn Award

MONO COUNTY, Calif. (June 4, 2025) — Mono County is proud to announce that Salvador (Sal) Montanez, Behavioral Health Services Coordinator at Mono County Behavioral Health (MCBH), has been honored with the first-ever Richard Van Horn Award by the Steinberg Institute. This prestigious award recognizes Montanez's exceptional leadership, innovative approaches, and unwavering dedication to providing empowering, recovery-focused behavioral health services in rural California.

The Richard Van Horn Award was established to honor the legacy of Richard Van Horn, a visionary leader committed to improving the lives of individuals with severe and chronic mental illness through real quality of life outcomes like employment and housing. Endowed by his family, the award is presented annually to a Californian whose work embodies Van Horn's core values: a commitment to recovery, dignity, and meaningful opportunities for those living with mental illness.

With over 12 years of service at MCBH, Montanez currently supports children and families through individualized, wraparound care. His work is characterized by a highly collaborative model that emphasizes real-world outcomes, including housing stability, recovery from substance use, and youth engagement. Montanez believes in finding community-based solutions to prevent individuals from needing higher levels of care, such as locked facilities.

Montanez's approach is shaped by his background in chemical addiction studies and his early work with the juvenile justice system. He consistently focuses on bridging various systems—connecting courts, schools, hospitals, and tribal communities—to ensure that vulnerable individuals have access to culturally responsive and effective behavioral health services.

Karen Larsen, CEO of the Steinberg Institute, praised Montanez, stating, "*Salvador represents the very best of what it means to be a public servant in behavioral health. His work is rooted in respect for the individual, an unwavering belief in recovery, and a passion for designing systems that truly work for families. We are proud to honor him with this award.*"

For more information about Salvador (Sal) Montanez, the Richard Van Horn Award, and the 2025 Steinberg Institute Champions, please visit: <https://steinberginstitute.org/champions/>.