



**Gianella “Gia” Quinones
Mental Health Counselor III
Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center**

Gianella “Gia” Quinones is Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center’s (SAMHC) nominee for the 2020 Louise R. Hassenplug Outstanding Clinician Award. Though Ms. Quinones has only been at the Center for a short period of time, she brings a wealth of experience from her previous employment in Mississippi. As a native Spanish speaker, she has put her passion for serving the Hispanic population into action.

Originally hired as a School Mental Health Services counselor, Ms. Quinones changed districts to bring her into contact with a community with a larger percentage of Spanish-speaking patients. She quickly forged a relationship with PASOs and the Hispanic Alliance, and her outreach efforts are largely responsible for SAMHC receiving the Outstanding Community Service Award from PASOs in 2019. She has also been asked to serve on the Board of the Hispanic Alliance, and has started a women’s group at the local Family Resource Center, successfully serving a population the Center had been unable to effectively reach in the past. In addition to these efforts, she has also taken on the responsibility for leading the Zero Suicide efforts at the Center. As is typical of Ms. Quinones, she has taken wholeheartedly to the task and engaged the entire mental health center in the effort, ensuring we will be ready with safety plans for all patients.

Ms. Quinones has been able to bring an admirable balance of clinical skills, a desire for social justice, and enthusiasm to her position in a way that not only has helped her patients but also helped the Center as a whole. Though she is new to SCDMH, she is more than worthy of the award and the recognition.