

# PRIMA PRESS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR MEMBERS

texasprima.org  
Texas Chapter Public Risk Management Association

December 2019

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## President's Message



As 2019 comes to an end, let's reflect back on how we interpreted the Egyptian symbols with our accomplishments, and lessons learned and how we continue to build upon the Pyramids of Risk Management.

Our 30th Annual Conference at Moody Gardens was yet another great success. We largely credit our membership, eloquent speakers, exhibitors and ever-supporting and generous sponsors. We had our first First-Time Attendee Breakfast & Orientation for 109 first time attendees. Our keynote speakers had personal, professional, and encouraging messages. We opened the conference with a challenge to transition to a "Dare to Matter" mindset. The conference closed with a strong message of personal survival and how to deal with tragedy at any given moment. I hope that most of you left the conference with a focus on your personal and professional lives with the realization of stopping what you are doing to appreciate your loved ones.

The events throughout the conference were a fantastic way to build relationships, gain knowledge for your professional career, and network with colleagues, exhibitors and our sponsors. From Casino Night to the non-stop dancing with the awesome band, Suede, we had an unforgettable event. Thanks to our attendees, the Egyptian theme came to life with our awesome costumes.

The 30th Anniversary and Awards Celebration was a special ceremony to recognize all of our Egyptian Pharaohs and Cleopatra's. Congratulations to all of our award winners: Gilbert Sanchez, Risk Professional of the Year, Lizette Gomez, Rising Star, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, Public Risk Management Awareness Day, City of Corpus Christi for their Underground Utility Damage Prevention Program, City of San Antonio for their Fire Department Workers' Compensation & Cancer Resource Guidebook, City of San Marcos for their

Safety, Security and & Emergency Response Program, and Katy ISD Workers' Compensation and Healthcare Annual Summits.

To the handful of colleagues that had a vision and determination 30 years ago to build and grow this association, most importantly – build respectful and life-long relationships - THANK YOU!

A very special thank you to our Past President, Donna Stirman, for your leadership and years of service on the Board of Directors. The Scholarship Program has been very successful due to your time and dedication! Donna will be leaving the board this year. I also want to recognize Leslie Milvo who stepped up to fill a vacant position as a director and served her two terms. Thank you also for your time and dedication to Texas PRIMA.

Moving ahead, we are already planning for 2020. The first regional seminar will be here in my “neck of the woods” – Sugar Land. The 2019 Education Committee is making way for planning and presenters and setting the stage for 2020. Our next stop is at La Cantera Resort and Spa in San Antonio.

As the outgoing 2019 Texas PRIMA President, thank you to the Board of Directors for all your hard work, our membership, exhibitors, sponsors and more importantly – our family and friends! May everyone have a Merry Christmas and welcome the New Year with open arms.



*Norma Martinez*  
2019 Texas PRIMA President

[View 2019 Photos Here!](#)

**Save the Date: November 8-11, 2020**  
**Texas PRIMA Annual Conference - La Cantera Resort & Spa, San Antonio**

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## Texas PRIMA Education Committee

Texas PRIMA offered 8 webinars this year with topics ranging from Cancer Presumptions, Excavation Safety, Hearing Conservation, and a Legislative Overview to name a few. We also offered a “Know Before You Go” webinar the week before our annual conference to help attendees maneuver a successful conference. We’ve found the webinars successfully offer education to a wide-cast territory of members across our great state. And, if you were unable to attend, they’re recorded and memorialized on our website to access at your convenience (log in to the member’s only section and look for the webinars link on home page).

*Robert Warren and Melissa Steger*  
*Education Committee Chair and Webinar Committee Chair*

### SAVE THE DATE...2020 REGIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT SEMINARS



## 2019 Texas PRIMA Awards

This year's conference was incredible. We got to experience some "Pyramids" in Risk Management, we were offered opportunities to build our own pyramids of Risk Management, and we awarded several deserving awards. Texas PRIMA awarded three different types of awards this year: Risk Professional of the Year, Rising Star Award, and several Risk Program Achievement Awards. We were able to hear from the recipients and were honored to hear their stories and their programs.



### **Risk Professional of the Year**

This year Texas PRIMA awarded Gilbert M. Sanchez, Safety and Risk Manager with the City of Corpus Christi, with the Risk Professional of the Year. Gilbert has over 27 years of Risk Management experience with multiple entities throughout the state of Texas. Currently with the City of Corpus Christi, he oversees an \$11 million budget that includes Safety, Workers' Compensation, Liability, Contractual Review, Property and Casualty Insurance Procurement (Tier I Property Program), and Claims and Litigation Programs. He previously served on the Board of Directors for Texas PRIMA. He currently serves as the Vice-Chair of My Texas Direct 504 Network.



### **Rising Star**

Lizette Gomez, Benefits Manager for the City of Edinburg, has worked in public entities for 14 years. She entered Risk Management in 2017 with the City of Pharr and recently became the Benefits Manager for the City of Edinburg. In 2017 she received her Master's in Public Affairs and is currently working on her Associate in Risk Management. While with the City of Pharr she administered the city's Workers' Compensation Program, Return to Work Program, Safety Committee, Property and Casualty Claims, Wellness Program, and Employee Benefits. In her new position with the City of Edinburg, she is looking forward to contributing towards the Risk Management/Human Resources fields.

### **Risk Program Achievement Awards**

City of Corpus Christi: Underground Utility Damage Prevention Program

City of San Antonio: Fire Department Workers' Compensation & Cancer Resource Guidebook

City of San Marcos: Safety, Security & Emergency Response Program

Katy ISD: Workers' Compensation and Healthcare Annual Summits

Port of Corpus Christi: Public Risk Management Awareness Day

For more information about this year's award recipients, please check out the awards section of the Texas PRIMA Website. We look forward to hearing about the further success stories from every one of you.

D. Jason Hardy CSRM  
*2019 Awards Chair*

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## Tribute to Out-Going President Norma Martinez

Texas PRIMA is fortunate to have been under Norma's leadership this year and we are proud to add her name to the roll of thirty plus years of great Texas PRIMA Presidents. Norma's energetic style of leadership, her ability to listen before concluding, her openness to new ideas, and her passion and energy for making Texas PRIMA the best it can be are all things to admire about her. While her term of president is coming to a close, Norma will remain on the board in the capacity of immediate past president and we look forward to her continued support of Texas PRIMA. To sum up Norma's year as president, the following quote is most fitting: "Leadership is not about being the best. Leadership is about making everyone else better." Texas PRIMA is definitely better for having been under Norma's leadership this year. Thank you for your service, Norma!

Lesley Ward  
*2019 President Elect*

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## 2020 Board of Directors

The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce the addition of two new Directors-at-Large to the Texas PRIMA Board. Elections were conducted in October and the newly elected Board members were announced during our annual conference in Galveston this November. The new board term begins January 1, 2020. CONGRATULATIONS to James Alvarez and Betsy Ramos, the two nominees voted into office to fill the vacant Directors-at-Large positions.



### **James Alvarez, Risk Specialist, Travis County**

James Alvarez coordinates the processing and auditing of new risk management claims for Travis County. He verifies bonafide job offers and works on safety initiatives with employees and departments to prevent injuries.



### **Betsy Ramos, Division Manager, City of Houston**

Betsy Ramos is responsible for oversight of the City's Workers' Compensation program requiring collaboration with injured workers, internal departments, a Third Party Administrator and their Vendor Partners.

The 2020 Texas PRIMA 2020 Board consists of:

PRESIDENT: Lesley Ward, City of Bryan

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Jason Hardy, Grand Prairie ISD

SECRETARY: Robert Warren, City of Arlington

TREASURER: Cindy Conyers, City of San Marcos

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Norma Martinez, City of Sugar Land

PAST PRESIDENT: Donna James-Spruce, Port of Corpus Christi Authority

DIRECTORS: Belinda Raindl, San Jacinto River Authority and Melissa Steger, UT System

ELECTED for 2020: James Alvarez, Travis County and Betsy Ramos, City of Houston

Here's to another year of serving you, our Texas PRIMA members!

Melissa Steger

*2019 Nominations and Election Committee Chair*

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## Members on the Move

McGriff Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc. welcomes Scott Payne in their public entity practice group.

Port Houston welcomes Norma Essary to the Port as Director of the Risk and Safety Management department. Norma will take Bruce Birdwell's position upon his retirement.

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## Texas PRIMA 30th Annual Conference Scholarship Program



What a fantastic 30th conference we had at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Convention Center in Galveston. All the hard work from our PRIMA Cleopatra (President) and Scribes (board) made Building the Pyramids of Risk Management gathering at conference the best year yet!



This year marked my eighth year to serve on the Scholarship Committee. We had a record number of 33 applications submitted, of which 32 were eligible, and awarded 24 scholarships to attend. We started the conference Sunday afternoon with a private reception in the President's Suite, honoring our recipients and scholarship sponsors. A heartfelt thank you goes out to our generous sponsors this year; Carlisle Insurance Agency, Inc., CIGNA, Commercial Risk Services, Delta Dental Insurance Company, First Financial, Injury Management Organization, Inc., Marathon Health, McGriff, Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc., Sedgwick, Trinity Review Services, Inc., and UnitedHealthcare. We could not do this without you.

I am proud to introduce our 2019 Texas PRIMA Conference Scholarship Recipients:

Eliza Adcox, City of Austin Police Dept.  
Terrence Beaman, City of Bellaire  
Jacqueline Brown, Spring ISD  
Wayne Brown, University of Houston  
Lisa Cariker, City of Palestine  
Daphene Carson, Edgewood ISD  
Kim Dawson, Texas Health & Human Services Commission  
Laura Duran, City of Arlington  
Rudy Estrada, Austin State Hospital  
Michelle Evans, City of Lancaster  
Sandra Galvan, Hays County Sheriff's Office  
Cynthia Gutierrez, City of Edinburg  
Shondra Holmes, City of Sugarland  
Cynthia Hume, City of Fort Worth  
Pearl Jauregui, Bexar County  
Carmellow Jones, Tarrant County  
Adam Kinyicky, City of New Braunfels  
Britney McCartney, Northside ISD  
Amanda Monsivais, City of Midlothian  
Chuong Phung, City of Grand Prairie  
Laura Saldana, El Paso Community College  
Na'Taja Smith, Texas City ISD  
Miriam Whitsitt, Lone Star College System  
Maria Q. Wildberger, Department of State Health Services

I'd like to share some excerpts from a few emails I received after conference;

- Wayne Brown thanked us for the scholarship and the chance to get reacquainted with PRIMA. He enjoyed the risk management related courses offered and opportunities to speak with vendors that could potentially help their program at the University of Houston.
- Lisa Cariker shared attending the conference gave her a great insight into public sector risk management. The sessions were informative and meeting people in the field was such a valuable resource for networking. She was impressed with the organization and family atmosphere within Texas PRIMA.
- Kim Dawson enjoyed the speakers and there was so much to learn. The fellowship with others in Risk Management and learning how different organizations handle workers comp. She can't wait for PRIMA next year.
- Laura Duran said the quality of the content, connections, camaraderie and networking opportunities were amazing! She's looking forward to building on new relationships, learning and sharing knowledge.
- Rudy Estrada thanked the board for the scholarship to conference. His goal, other than more education, was determining if the conference be worthwhile to send his people to next year and the answer is yes!
- Sandra Galvan was thankful for the opportunity to attend the PRIMA Conference and for the scholarship award. The PRIMA board members went above and beyond to make the new attendees feel welcomed. She said she was semi-new to the Human Resources field, and Risk Management is not something she has much exposure to so attending the conference was a great experience. The variety of breakout sessions made it difficult to choose, but all the sessions attended were informational and relevant. She especially enjoyed the Keynote Speakers, Pete Smith, and Bruce Ure. She is looking forward to attending more PRIMA training.
- Pearl Jauregui wrote the conference was very interesting and educational hearing how other entities/companies process and manage their workers comp and liability. The speakers were fantastic and opened her thoughts on how to handle challenging claims. The networking was fun and pleasant. She said PRIMA is like a family reunion and is looking forward to next year's PRIMA Conference.
- Chuong Phung shared the conference was a wonderful experience for him. As someone new to the area of risk management, it was invaluable to be in an environment where he was surrounded by people that were

already incredibly knowledgeable about their jobs, yet still wanted to learn more.

- Laura Saldana stated as a first time attendee to the Texas PRIMA Conference she learned a lot and appreciated how personable and approachable everyone was. All of the sessions she attended were very helpful and she is looking forward to next year's conference and thanks the board and sponsors for the wonderful opportunity.
- Na'Taja Smith said the Texas PRIMA conference was about gaining more knowledge and networking with peers.
- Mariam Whitsitt thanked us for the opportunity to meet other risk management professionals from across the state. The classes offered were extremely informative and helpful in expanding her knowledge base.
- Maria Wildberger said thank you PRIMA for allowing her the privilege of attending the Texas PRIMA 2019. It was jammed packed with sessions and vendors as well. The networking was amazing and the CEU's are a great help as well. She is looking forward to 2020!

It was a pleasure meeting each of these Risk Professionals and we look forward to seeing you in 2020 at LaCantera Resort & Spa in San Antonio for the 31st annual PRIMA Conference.

*Donna Parker Stirman*  
2019 Scholarship Chair

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## Second Annual Public Risk Management Awareness Day!



Greetings everyone! Even though some of us are making our Christmas lists and favorite yuletide recipes, March 1, 2020 will be here before we know it. It's hard to believe that the 2nd Annual Public Risk Management Awareness Day will be here in just a few short months. Start planning now! Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislation passed a House Bill for this day to be recognized across this great State. This is a springboard which raises awareness throughout your entity, on the purpose and value of risk management. You can use the [toolkit](#) on the Texas PRIMA website to help you with resolutions or proclamations. The logo and its uses are also in the toolkit. Last year we had participation from counties, school districts, cities, port authorities, etc. Post your events on our social media platform and let all our members know how you celebrate this day.

Creative rationale for the logo is that the star is the base for the logo, representing Texas, the state in which the Public Risk Management Awareness Day originated. The five points of the star abstractly represent the five stages/processes of the enterprise risk management process model; scan environment, identify risks, analyze risks, treat risks, monitor and assure. The colors and reversed wave are a subtle representation of the Port of Corpus Christi, who initiated the day of awareness for public risk management.

Remember, the goal is to bring a heightened level of awareness and education throughout entities and communities by giving public risk management a platform to create special activities, proclamations and publications commemorating every March 1st as Public Risk Management Awareness Day!

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## Sponsor Highlight



We are honored to support Texas PRIMA for more than 15 years and to serve as the Third Party Administrator of choice to many cities, counties, school districts, transit systems and other special districts across Texas.

Founded in 1987, TRISTAR's mission has remained consistent for more than 30 years: to provide the highest quality claims management services to our clients. TRISTAR's first Texas office opened in 1998, and our operations have grown to include branches in Irving, Houston, San Antonio and Corpus Christi.

TRISTAR is the largest independently owned third party property and casualty claims administrator in the United States. We focus our operations in three divisions: property and casualty claims management (TRISTAR Risk Management), benefits administration (TRISTAR Benefits Administrators), and managed care and medical cost containment services (TRISTAR Managed Care). Each division provides services nationwide, and we have more than 650 employees in offices across the country.

TRISTAR specializes in serving Texas public entities, and we understand the everyday challenges faced by risk managers. The diverse exposures in the public sector are unlike any in the private sector: from school teachers to sworn officers, parks and recreation to courts and corrections. Public entities require an expert TPA with the knowledge and experience to aggressively manage claims to best outcomes for both the client and the claimant, while assuring compliance with all jurisdiction-specific legal requirements and protocols.

We offer innovative solutions to help manage each claim to best possible outcome and control our clients' total cost of risk, including advanced systems functionality, telephonic nurse triage, integrated disability management, 504 and HCN network administration, and cutting edge utilization review services and technology.

TRISTAR also hosts round-table discussions year round for risk managers on hot topics in public entity workers' compensation, including cancer and PTSD in workers' compensation. Please contact [events@TRISTARgroup.net](mailto:events@TRISTARgroup.net) if you are interested in attending future sessions.



AWPRx is a boutique national Pharmacy Benefit Manager for the workers' compensation industry. We are privately owned and have been in business for 25 years. Our program and customer service is completely personalized, we have some of the best pricing in the industry and our software is extremely user friendly. We care about our customers and providing the best services to their injured workers.

As we have continued to develop and enhance the AWPRx offering to serve our Texas based clients, we have found that our values and goals are particularly aligned with the Texas Chapter of PRIMA. With all the consolidation and upheaval in our industry, there is a definite vacuum in the service and customization that Texas has come to expect. Through sponsoring and partnering with Texas PRIMA, it is our goal to fill this void, to be a trusted partner, and to provide you with the service that you deserve.

## **Thank you Sponsors!**

### **Platinum**

McGriff Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc | Sedgwick | TRISTAR | AON

### **Diamond**

AS&G | Aetna | UnitedHealthcare | CIGNA | SLTX | Injury Management Organization, Inc | PMA Companies | AWPRx

### **Gold**

Texas Political Subdivisions | Munich RE | Midwest Employers Casualty Company | Safety National | Carlisle Insurance Agency, Inc. | Pate Rehabilitation | Lockton Dunning Benefits | RediMD | RWH Myers & Company

**Silver**

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Svc, Inc. | TASB Risk Management Fund | Texas Association of Counties | TML-IRP | Travelers | CorVel | USI Insurance | Concentra | HCA Asset Management, LLC | Frost Insurance Agency | Claims Administrative Services | Trident | First Financial | Genesis Mgt & Insurance Svc, Inc. | Delta Dental Insurance | Trinity Review Services | CHUBB | CCMSI | Lytx | Blackmon Mooring/BMS CAT | Commercial Risk Services | Asperta, Ltd. | Novare | Alamo Insurance Group | Morrison Investigations | Genex Services | The Jenkins Agency, Inc. | Metadata | Berkley Public Entity Managers | Marathon Health | D.A. Lamont Public Adjusters | VRC Investigations | Medical Equation | myMatrixx

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