

October 2013
Kyle Nissen

Kylie Nissen is the Senior Program Coordinator at the North Dakota Center for Rural Health (CRH) and is the Executive Director of the ND Rural Health Association (NDRHA). In addition, she serves on the NOSORH Communications Committee.

How does your work with the NDRHA feed your work with the CRH and vice versa?

Through my work with the State Office, I also serve as the NDRHA Executive Director. The NDRHA has a contract with the CRH to provide executive director, graphics, and web services. So much of the work I do for one feeds into the other. It has allowed for opportunities to collaborate on numerous occasions. For instance, while the CRH is not able to advocate, the NDRHA does have this ability. During the legislative sessions the CRH (education) and the NDRHA (advocacy) work hand-in-hand to provide optimum outcomes for rural health in North Dakota. NDRHA and the CRH have also been major partners and promoters of National Rural Health Day within North Dakota.

My role with NDRHA is to facilitate the conversations between members and help them decide what they are going to work together to address and how they will execute it. By having a group of people that are not just hospitals, not just pharmacists, not just nurses, but a mixture of numerous areas involved in rural healthcare both directly and indirectly, all rallied around a common cause, it makes a big impact. A big part I play is as a cheerleader. It is my job to keep all of the volunteers that the NDRHA is made up of motivated and on task, getting things done when it isn't their primary job.

What's the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is the people--within the Center, the state and the nation. Nearly everyone that I encounter in this job has a passion for what they do. It is tremendously motivating when you are surrounded by this type of people.

In addition to your work at the CRH and with NOSORH and NDRHA, you show horses in your spare time. How do you juggle it all?

Rural is where my heart is and I have always had a passion for health care. In addition to my full-time job with CRH, I also serve as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which, in a rural state like North Dakota, has a big rural focus. I'm also working on my Masters in Public Health with a rural focus. Juggling it all can get a little tough at times, but with the support of an amazing husband and family, it all works out. Something I always worry about is being able to spend time with my daughter--thankfully she loves horses too, so we spend every weekend together showing horses and barrel racing.