

Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

February, 2013

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February 7

- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (EMS) Committee (3 pm EST)

February 12

- Development Committee (2 pm EST)

February 19

- Policy Committee Call (2 pm EST)
- NOSORH Annual Meeting Planning Committee Call (3 pm EST)

February 20

- Learning Community: Rural Health Clinics TA (2 pm EST)

February 26

- Communications Committee (1 pm EST)
- Webinar – SORH Partnerships: Who, How and Why (3 pm EST)

February 28

- Flex Committee (3 pm EST)

See You at the NRHA Policy Institute!



Are you ready for the National Rural Health Association's [Policy Institute](#) (Feb. 4-6, 2013 in Washington, D.C.)? If not, be sure to check out NOSORH's January 24th webinar, Preparing to Engage Legislators and Policymakers. Click [here](#) to listen to a recording of the webinar. As a Policy Institute (PI) partner, NOSORH continues to play an active role there each year—NOSORH

President Scott Ekblad will be part of a Medicaid panel. Other sessions include the Future of Rural Health Care, Sequestration and Rural Impact, and Threats to Rural Hospitals. **Please note: there will not be a membership meeting at the PI this year.** Please let us know if we can support your efforts at the PI in any way.

Congratulations to the 2012 NOSORH Grantwriting Institute Graduates!



Congratulations to everyone who recently completed the 2012 NOSORH Grantwriting Institute. In all, 67 certificates were awarded. "I want to thank Kassie Clarke for her good work with the Institute!" said NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger. "Grant writing is a huge task and I admire each and every participant who has an interest in finding ways to support communities with grant funds. Special

congratulations to all those who earned a certificate of completion!" For a full list of GWI graduates, click [here](#).

Watch the NOSORH web site and future issues of the Branch for details on the upcoming 2013 Grantwriting Institute.

NNOHA/NOSORH Partnership Continues: New Survey Reveals Majority of SORHs Working on Oral Health Projects

Last summer, the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) and NOSORH initiated a plan to provide oral health resources and technical assistance to State Offices of Rural Health (SORHs). The project started with the organizations presenting at each other's annual conferences; NOSORH presented a session on Oral Health in Rural America last September and NNOHA gave a presentation on oral health disparities and improving access to care at the NOSORH Annual Meeting last October. Discussions at both sessions confirmed the need to support SORHs in their efforts to provide oral health resources to rural America.

To better help SORHs, NNOHA and NOSORH conducted a survey in December to assess SORHs' current oral health work and interest in technical assistance trainings. The survey received responses from 37 states. The results revealed that

79% of respondents are actively working on oral health issues in their states. The most common projects being conducted by SORHs include recruitment and state loan repayment programs, school-based oral health screenings, advocacy for water fluoridation, and helping both health center and private dentists better understand Medicaid billing and reimbursement procedures. SORHs are collaborating with a variety of organizations on their oral health work: 81% are working with their state oral health programs, 62% with Federally Qualified Health Centers, 48.6% with other safety net clinics, and 27% with local school districts. "Unfortunately, it's not a surprise the recruitment and retention is at the top of this list. Ensuring access to providers continues to be a challenge in rural America," said NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger.

The survey also revealed a significant interest in oral health technical



assistance trainings from NNOHA. According to NNOHA's Executive Director, Annette Zacharias, "The webinars can be an opportunity for SORHs to not only learn about innovative practices from on-the-ground health center dental providers, but to also share their own successful programs with one another."

The first webinar for SORHs will occur this spring, covering recruitment and retention strategies. NNOHA members and SORHs will receive joint training. If you have any questions about this partnership, please contact Stephanie Hansen at steph@nosorh.org.

Please visit our [News & Events](#) section to learn about these and additional upcoming events.

Leadership Institute Kicks Off!

The NOSORH 2013 Leadership Institute has kicked off with a 16-member class from 11 states, composed of SORH leaders and community leaders. Eight community leaders received scholarships to participate. Each participant will do a project and soon will be looking for mentors. Our thanks to Heartland Institute for sponsoring the Institute and to Denny Berens for the endowment funds that supported the scholarships.

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For questions, comments or ideas for Branch articles, please contact Beth Blevins, Branch editor at bethb@nosorh.org. For questions about Branch distribution, please contact Paige Law at paigel@nosorh.org.

New Resources



Text4baby is the first free mobile health service, developed in partnership by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nonprofit organizations, and corporate sponsors. The service offers **free** critical health and safety information about pregnancy and a baby's first year of life (there are no messaging charges). Women can enroll on the Text4baby website (<http://www.text4baby.org>) or by texting "BABY" for the English service or "BEBE" for the Spanish service to 511411. A user registers due dates or baby's birth date along with her zip code and receives a message on her cell phone on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday every week timed to her due date or baby's birthday. The primary target audience for text4baby is women who may be at higher risk for poor health outcomes and may have problems accessing health information.



The American Institute for Preventive Medicine has been working with the Veterans Administration on a variety of health education projects. Their **Veterans Health at Home Self-Care Guide** aims to help vets make better decisions about when to seek professional assistance versus when they can treat themselves at home using self-care. In several VA studies, this guide has demonstrated significant reductions in unnecessary doctor and ER visits and calls to the nurse triage center. The guide is available as a full-color book and electronically. For more information, see www.aipm.net/va. In addition, the Institute has other self-care guides geared toward the general population, which have been used for rural health population initiatives. For more information, click [here](#).



The **Rural Border Health Chartbook**, from the South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, is now available at <http://rhr.sph.sc.edu>. Questions pertaining to this report should be directed to Dr. Amy Martin at brocka@mailbox.sc.edu.

AHRQ and Montana Health Care Leaders Meet to Support Effective Health Care Efforts

As part of its continued efforts to promote comparative effectiveness research (CER), the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has been meeting with state and local entities, including the Montana Office of Rural Health and Montana Area Health Education Center last November. CER provides information that helps clinicians and patients work together to treat an illness or condition by comparing drugs, medical devices, tests, surgeries, and ways to deliver health care.

Attendees at the Montana meeting were introduced to AHRQ's [Effective](#)

[Health Care](#) (EHC) Program, which works with researchers, research centers, and academic organizations to produce patient-centered outcomes research and translate findings into useful formats for a variety of audiences. They also participated in a discussion about using EHC's evidence-based resources in practice. "It spurred several ideas for continuing education, and ways to improve patient education," said Kris Juliar, director of the Montana Office of Rural Health. "In a rural state like Montana, the AHRQ resources are just what we need to improve quality and patient outcomes. It was a very easy and painless project

for us. They did all the work—we just had to set up the meeting." As a result of the meeting, several Montana organizations—including the Montana Medical Association, Montana Nurses Association, and Montana Primary Care Association—joined AHRQ's [National Partnership Network](#).

For more information, or to set up a CER project, contact Kate Wilson Stabrawa at 303-527-4617 or kate.stabrawa@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Promising Practices Collection

We want to hear your success stories! NOSORH would like to showcase the innovative, effective, and valuable work that SORHs are doing across the country with features in the Branch and on our website. Contact Beth Blevins, Branch editor, at bethb@nosorh.org to set up a short email or phone interview in which you can tell your story.

Help Make the 2013 NOSORH Annual Meeting a Success!



We are still looking for SORHs to be part of the Planning Committee for the NOSORH Annual Meeting (which will be held in Asheville, N.C., on October 28-30, 2013). Contact Stephanie Hansen (steph@nosorh.org) if you'd like help.

Upcoming Learning Community Calls

Thursday, February 20, 2013, 2:00-3:00 PM EST

Rural Health Clinic Learning Community

For: SORH staff
What: Open discussion of RHC issues

Theme: Supporting quality improvement in RHCs

Phone: 877-668-4493
Access Code: 661 670 469

Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 3:00-4:00 PM EST

Rural Health Workforce Learning Community

For: SORH and other partners interested in rural health workforce issues
What: Open discussion of the issues that interest you

Theme: Supporting Oral Health workforce in your state

Phone: 877-668-4493
Access Code: 666 748 930

Publishing Opportunity for Papers on Rural Pharmacy Practice

The American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy (AJHP) is seeking papers on pharmacy practice at small and rural hospitals. Descriptions of innovative experiences, including approaches to problem solving or program creation, will be given priority. Original research papers and opinion pieces are also welcome. Papers for this series can be submitted for consideration in different AJHP sections, including Frontline Pharmacist, Case Studies, Medication-Use Technology, Notes, among others. Different sections

of AJHP are described on page 3 of the procedural checklist, along with information for submissions, available at: <http://www.ashp.org/DocLibrary/AJHP/AJHPProcedureChecklist.aspx>.

"What's special about this initiative is that it's a concentrated effort by one of the top pharmacy journals worldwide," said Neil J. MacKinnon, BSc (Pharm), MSc (Pharm), PhD, Director of the Arizona Center for Rural Health. "They are planning to print one to two articles per issue, spread over several

issues. It's a great opportunity for NOSORH members and for folks across the United States to hear about rural hospital pharmacy. They want to hear about practical initiatives going on in small rural hospitals like medication use safety and efforts to improve quality. It doesn't have to be written by a researcher or a pharmacist—a doctor or nurse could write about pharmacy issues in their hospital."

Rural Training Tracks the Focus of Idaho Meeting



You're invited to Boise, Idaho for the Third Annual RTT National Conclave (February 27-March 1, 2013). This meeting will mark the progress of Rural Training Tracks (RTTs) nationally, but also provide a platform for our future work. Specifically, we will discuss the newly formed "RTT Collaborative," which is a sustainable organization in support of our nation's RTTs.

As the [agenda](#) outlines, the meeting will have dialogue around important issues facing RTT programs today and will address key factors for developing programs, program partners and stakeholders.

Whether you are representing a long-standing RTT program or contemplating starting a new one, the RTT National Conclave will provide information as well as peer support to carry forward the mission of training exceptional family physicians for rural and underserved locations.

Idaho is the home of three accredited RTTs and has focused its resources on rural track training for the right reasons. You will have the opportunity to visit both Boise as well as the nearby RTT in Caldwell, Idaho, which has been providing quality education and producing rural-inspired graduates since its inception in 1995.

The RTT Technical Assistance program has continued to demonstrate success in playing an important role in sustaining existing RTT programs, supporting new program development and increasing medical student awareness about RTT training opportunities. Please join us in Boise for this capstone gathering as we continue to forge the future of RTT rural residency education.

Get Your February Steal Sheet!

Get your February Steal Sheet—items from this month's Branch that you can "steal" for use in your newsletters, emails, etc. (This month's Steal Sheet also includes additional items on grant opportunities.) It's all in a downloadable Word file that you can cut and paste as needed. To get your Steal Sheet, go to the [NOSORH Steal Sheets](#) section of the Toolkits page.