

Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

July, 2013

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July 10-11

- Region E Meeting – Denver, CO

July 11

- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (JCREC) Committee (3pm EDT)

July 16

- Policy Committee (3pm EDT)

July 29

- Learning Community – Integrating Primary Care and Public Health (2 pm EDT)
- Rural Health Clinic Committee (3pm EDT)

July 30

- Education Exchange Committee (12 pm EDT)
- Webinar: Preparing for National Rural Health Day (3pm EDT)

SORHs Gather in Rhode Island for Region A Meeting



Representatives from Region A SORHs, NOSORH and FORHP met in Rhode Island last month to discuss health care reform, telehealth and quality measures.

Health reform implementation, Meaningful Use of Electronic Health Records, Telehealth Delivery Models and Health System Market Changes were among the topics discussed last month at the [Region A](#) Grantees meeting in Providence, RI.

"We spent a great deal of time discussing different aspects of health reform and ACA," said Stephanie Hansen, NOSORH

Education and Services Director. "I think we all walked away with a greater appreciation of how SORHs should and can be involved in the ACA."

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Deepti Loharikar, Health Policy Analyst at the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, presented the [Affordable Care Act and You](#)
- Melissa Hansen, State Health Policy Specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures, presented an [Overview of Health Reform Implementation](#) which covered Medicaid Expansion and Health Insurance Exchanges
- John A. Gale, a Research Associate at the Maine Rural Health Research Center, gave presentations on [Meaningful Use of Electronic Medical Records](#) and [Rural Telemental Health Delivery Models](#)
- Teryl Eisinger, Executive Director at NOSORH, spoke about [Evaluation Methods for Rural Programs](#)

Materials from presentations given at the meeting are available on the NOSORH [Past Events Materials](#) web page under the listing "Jun 18 - 20, 2013."

NOSORH Annual Meeting

We're busy planning for the NOSORH Annual Meeting, which will be held in Asheville, N.C., October 28-30, 2013. "The timing is great for SORHs to learn more about Health Insurance Marketplaces and discuss how they can be involved and partner to help promote them," said Teryl Eisinger,

NOSORH Executive Director. This year's registration will be sent by July 30th; the registration fee for SORHs is \$300. To review the draft agenda click [here](#).

There's still time to sign up as a sponsor for the NOSORH Annual Meeting.

Sponsors are recognized during the meeting and as part of National Rural Health Day, and provided time for networking with participants. For more information, please contact Donna Pfaendtner, NOSORH Administrator, at 586-336-4627 or donnap@nosorh.org.

NOSORH Committee News

A new **Rural Health Clinic Committee** (RHCC) has been formed and invites new members. "In recognition of the important work of the TA team over the last couple of years, Scott Ekblad, NOSORH President, appointed the team as an Ad Hoc Committee," said Teryl Eisinger. Gloria Vermie (IA) has agreed to chair the committee. In addition to working on RHC issues, RHCC will advise NOSORH staff and board members on seeking a new line of funding to build the capacity of SORHs working with RHCs and free clinics. Rita Salain, a former SORH Director, has been contracted to develop learning materials for SORHs

on this issue. NOSORH is planning a survey on SORH work with free and charitable clinics. Watch your email later this month for the survey. The first RHCC call will take place on July 29, 2013 at 3:00 EDT. Stephanie Hansen is the NOSORH staff contact steph@nosorh.org.

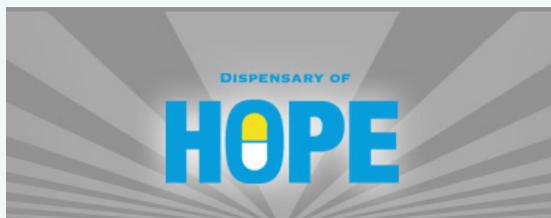
In a recent conference call, **Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care** (JCREC) members discussed the name change for community paramedicine. Some EMS partners are now referring to community paramedicine initiatives as "mobile integrated health." The name change was brought about for

a number of reasons, including better alignment with health reform. The committee has developed a survey on EMS Leadership Development for rural EMS. Results will be shared after survey results are in.

Larry Baronner, Critical Access Hospital Coordinator at the Pennsylvania SORH, has joined the work of the **Rural Integrated Services Task Force**. Of the new appointment, Baronner said, "I am pleased to serve on the task force during the time when new reimbursement systems are emerging around quality and value."

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

Prescription Dispensary Organization Offers “Hope”



The [Dispensary of Hope](#) (DoH), a 501(c)3 charity, is looking for networking partners and is reaching out to SORHs and other rural advocacy organizations to help get the word out about the availability of prescription medications provided at no cost to the poor and uninsured.

DoH is a licensed medication distributor that recovers donated surplus medication from physician offices, hospital pharmacies, manufacturers and other licensed healthcare providers. It inventories and tracks the medications in its Nashville-based center before distributing them through a national network of licensed nonprofit clinics and outpatient charitable pharmacies. The medications are offered to patients who are uninsured and are under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Annually, DoH moves

about \$18 million worth of medications. DoH is operated by Saint Thomas Health, an affiliate of Ascension Health, the nation's largest nonprofit and largest Catholic Health System. Currently, DoH is Board of Pharmacy-approved to send medication to clinics and pharmacies in 32 states. (For a current list of DoH dispensary states/sites, click [here](#)).

DoH is funded by foundations and grants, and through subscription fees from members of its network. The in-network subscription fee for unlimited amounts of medications is \$7,500 a year. Anita Stanford, Director of Site Network Development for DoH, pointed out that in 2012, in-network clinics received an average of \$102,000 worth of medications. In addition, DoH offers a free, non-subscription program for reduced-price diabetic supplies including meters, strips, and other control solutions.

“We work directly with the clinics and pharmacies to implement the drug inventory program,” Stanford said. “But we need the SORHs to help put clinics in contact with us. Spreading awareness of the Dispensary of Hope and a warm introduction is much appreciated.” Stanford is available to speak at conferences, and can supply articles and materials on DoH to any interested organizations. For more information, she can be reached at 888-428-HOPE or anita.stanford@dispensaryofhope.org.

Workshop Will Focus on Needs Assessment, Economic Impact and Mapping Tools

The National Center for Rural Health Works (RHW) will hold a Regional Workshop on August 15, 2013, in Denver, Colorado. The RHW Workshop, hosted by the Colorado Rural Health Center, will provide training in the following areas: determining the financial feasibility of or assessing the need for a new or expanded Rural Health Service; Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Toolkit; Economic Impact; and Mapping Tools. Registration is limited. For more information, visit the [RHW Workshops](#) page, click here for the [workshop flyer](#), or contact Cheryl St. Clair at cheryl@okstate.edu.

National Rural Health Day 2013 Is Coming!

National Rural Health Day 2013 will take place November 21, 2013, and we want to do whatever we can to make your celebration a success! As in year's past, NOSORH has an array of merchandise – buttons, magnets, banners, t-shirts and “scrub” shirts – available for you to use, wear or share. Simply click [here](#) or visit the [General Resources](#) section of the [National Rural Health Day Website](#) to download the order form and purchase your merchandise. For more information,

contact Donna Pfaendtner, NOSORH Administrator, either at 586-336-4627 or donnapp@nosorh.org.

NOSORH has several other resources available in the [General Resources](#) section of the NRHD website, including the National Rural Health Day logo (in JPG and PDF formats), and a “Save the Date” card that you can use to promote National Rural Health Day among your colleagues. Additional resources will be added throughout the summer,

so be sure to visit the NRHD website regularly.

The 2013 Key Messages will be featured during a webinar, Preparing for National Rural Health Day, on July 30, 2013 at 3pm EDT. We're looking forward to hearing how SORHs and partners have celebrated previous National Rural Health Days, and what they have planned for this year. Please plan to join us.

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Update from the NOSORH Legislative Liaison

Federal Budget

During the June Policy Committee call, Bill Finerfrock, NOSORH Legislative Liaison, reported that the starting budget number for 2014 that the Senate is operating from is different than what the House is working from. Finerfrock explained that the House adopted a budget with less money than the Senate put in their budget, and that working from different topline numbers will be difficult. He warned that it could be late this year when we find out what will happen and that it is possible another continuing resolution will come on October 1st. Regardless, appropriations will probably be reduced. Whatever happens with appropriations, Finerfrock said, “it won't be pretty.”

Health Insurance Marketplaces

Marketplaces are in the process of being set up. In most rural areas, there will only be a statewide plan available. Finerfrock suggested that SORHs keep an eye on exchanges and marketplaces in their states, and not get caught in the total number but look at overall availability in rural areas. Finerfrock is attending monthly meetings with CMS, and should have information on federal exchanges for NOSORH members that they can share with their providers. CMS is trying to take care of consumer information so they are focusing on providers who would benefit. In addition, CMS is creating toolkits for consumers and providers.

ICD-10 Conversion

On October 1, 2014, the ICD-9 code sets used to report medical diagnoses and inpatient procedures will be

replaced by [ICD-10](#) code sets. The transition to ICD-10 is required for all providers covered by the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act. According to Finerfrock, who also serves as president of National Association of Rural Health Clinics, it has been estimated that the conversion to ICD-10 will add five minutes to each visit. The longer it takes, the more the provider will see a financial reduction. Finerfrock said that small providers are going to be experiencing problems because of software and staffing issues, but there are organizations that can provide some training to help providers get ready. If NOSORH members have questions about the conversion, please email him at bf@capitolassociates.com and he will be happy to discuss it.

USDA Funding for Broadband

Applications are being accepted for USDA grants to finance broadband in remote, rural areas. USDA Rural Development may award up to \$21 million through the [Community Connect Grants](#) (CC) program, to serve rural communities where broadband service is not available. For more information, click [here](#). The deadline for applications is July 11, 2013.

In addition, USDA has announced new rules to better target CC grants to areas where they are needed the most. Click [here](#).

USDA Telemedicine Grant

A Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is expected this month from the USDA's [Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program](#) (DLT) for efforts aimed at serving rural America. The DLT grant program is designed to assist community facilities serving rural areas acquire distance learning and telemedical technologies. Each award will be between \$50,000 and \$500,000, with an expected total of \$17 million available. See [DLT web site](#) for eligibility requirements.

Sign up [here](#) to receive an email when the NOFA is released. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact their [State USDA Rural Development Office](#) for support and to email Sam Morgan at sam.morgan@wdc.usda.gov to notify USDA of their interest. Questions can be sent to: dltinfo@wdc.usda.gov.

New Resources

HHS, HRSA and ORHP Resources and Upcoming Webinars on the Affordable Care Act

Health Insurance Marketplace

The new Health Insurance Marketplace (HIM) will open for enrollment on October 1, 2013. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has updated [HealthCare.gov](#) to make it easy for consumers to sign up for coverage. For Spanish-speaking consumers, [CuidadoDeSalud.gov](#) also will be updated to match HealthCare.gov's new consumer focus.

In addition, there is a new toll-free Health Insurance Marketplace call center (800-318-2596) open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, where consumers can obtain information on their state's HIM. (Press "0" to reach a trained customer service representative).

Additional ACA Resources

- The new hhs.gov/healthcare has all the fact sheets, blogs, and news about the Affordable Care Act that used to be on HealthCare.gov.
- The latest official materials about the Marketplace can be found at the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services [resource site](#).
- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has created an [Affordable Care Act and HRSA Programs](#) web site, which has information specific to its safety net providers.
- The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will have weekly office hours for questions and answers on the ACA and ACA updates on Thursdays, from 3-4pm (EDT), beginning July 11, 2013. Contact Deepti Loharikar at 301-443-1324 or daranake@hrsa.gov for more information. In addition, FORHP welcomes ACA questions at its new ORHPACAQuestions@hrsa.gov email address.

Upcoming ACA webinars

HHS will host The Health Care Law - Health Insurance Marketplace 101 webinars, which will include information on how consumers can access care in their communities. The webinars will be held on the following dates:

- July 11, 2013 at 2:00pm EDT (Click [here](#) to register)
- August 7, 2013 at 3:00pm EDT (Click [here](#) to register)

Patient Safety Primer Offers Strategies to Prevent Medication Errors

A growing evidence base supports specific strategies to prevent adverse drug events (ADEs), according to a new patient safety primer on Medication Errors, posted online on the AHRQ Patient Safety Network (PSNet). The primer outlines strategies providers can use at each stage of the medication use pathway—prescribing, transcribing, dispensing, administration—to prevent ADEs. These strategies range from computerized provider order entry and clinical decision support, to minimizing nurse disruption and providing better patient education and medication labeling. The primer also identifies known risk factors for ADEs, including health literacy, patient characteristics, high alert medications and transitions in care. Click [here](#) to view the primer.

Quick Health Data Online

Health Resources and Services Administration Office of Women's Health announces the availability of Quick Health Data Online, an interactive tool that provides state and county-level data, by gender and race/ethnicity while looking at a variety of health status indicators. The tool is available at: <http://www.healthstatus2020.com/owh/>. (Click on the Start System link on the left column. This brings up a new screen that lets users pick variables such as state and county, and then generates a report).

Steal Sheet

This month's Steal Sheet includes articles and features from this month's Branch, including New Funding, Update from the NOSORH Legislative Liaison and Dispensary of Hope, as well as additional New Resources and Upcoming Webinars.

Click [here](#) to get it from the NOSORH Steal Sheets section on the Toolkits page.