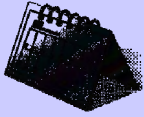


Mark your Calendar!



March 3

- Workforce Committee (1:30p.m. EST)

March 4

- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (3:00 p.m. EST)

March 10

- Annual Meeting Planning Committee (1:30 p.m. EST)

March 16

- Policy Committee (2:00 p.m. EDT)
- Webinar: *Medicare Issues for SORHs* (3:00 p.m. EDT)

March 18

- RHC Technical Assistance Team (2:00 p.m. EDT)

March 22

- Educational Exchange (1:30 p.m. EDT)

March 23

- Communications Committee (3:00 p.m. EDT)

March 25

- FLEX Committee (3:00 p.m. EDT)

April 1

- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (3:00 p.m. EDT)

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

The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

March 2010

Website: <http://www.nosorh.org/> Wiki space: <http://nosorh.wikispaces.com/>



NOSORH Gets Strategic!

During its annual planning meeting in January, the NOSORH Board of Directors adopted a series of “high-priority activities” that it hopes will expand the sphere of influence of NOSORH and SORHs in the coming year. They include:

- Enhancing comprehensive technical assistance services to meet the needs of SORHs;
- Diversifying funding sources;
- Increasing national awareness of rural America;
- Promoting best practices of SORHs;
- Creating “rapid response” team to identify and respond to emerging issues;

- Addressing needs of new and struggling SORH directors; and
- Conducting performance measurement to document the overall impact of SORHs.

“People need to understand the value of SORHs in addressing the needs of rural America,” notes NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger. “State Offices should be recognized in legislation and in grant guidance as anchors of information for rural health.”

The NOSORH Communications Committee has begun discussing the creation of a campaign to promote greater awareness of rural America

with policy makers, program leaders and others. Please contact Committee Chair [Karen Madden](#) or NOSORH Communications Coordinator [Bill Hessert](#) if you have any ideas to share and/or would like to be part of the committee. The next committee meeting will take place at 3:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, March 23.

NOSORH’s Development, HIT and Workforce committees invite anyone with ideas for accomplishing these activities to join their respective committees as well. Visit the [Committees](#) section of the NOSORH Web site for contact information and to learn more about each committee.

NOSORH Encourages Support for Rural-focused Medicare “Fixes”

The NOSORH Policy Committee is developing a strategy for encouraging Congress to consider rural-specific “fixes” to Medicare as part of ongoing health reform.

Medicare provides a much-needed lifeline to rural America’s disproportionately elderly population and the rural health system that serves

it. Medicare also sustains the health system rural residents rely on, comprising up to 80% of the income for some small rural hospitals. Therefore, it is imperative that Medicare provisions to ambulance services, home health agencies and others health providers that expired on December 31 be restored and other

Medicare provisions be revised to fit the characteristics of rural hospitals, clinics and other facilities.

Plans are being made for a Medicare-focused Webinar on Tuesday, March 16. Be sure to check the [News & Events](#) section of the NOSORH Web site over the next several weeks for call-in information and additional details.

Help Us Share Your Story!

NOSORH is working hard on sharing work of each SORH and needs your help doing so!

The SORH Profile survey will provide us with an inventory of state partnerships and examples of your work and successes; two-thirds of SORHs have answered our request for this information to date. State Offices that haven’t completed the SORH Profile Survey are asked to do so as soon as possible; just [click here](#) to get started. Please contact NOSORH Communications Coordinator [Bill Hessert](#) if you have difficulty completing the survey or have any other questions.



Alison Hughes, FLEX Director for the Arizona State Office of Rural Health Program, discussed the role of, and partnership opportunities with, State Offices of Rural Health during the VISN Rural Consultants (VRCs) Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona on February 11. VRCs lead Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) activities that seek to improve service delivery to veterans in rural areas. Those attending the conference included (L to R): Jeff Lowe (Wyoming), VISN Region 19 telehealth manager; Alison Hughes; Pat Ryan (Florida), VISN Region 8 program director; Kristin Pettey (Alabama), VISN Region 7 rural consultant; Joe Kohut (Ohio), VISN Region 10, PCL director; Jackie Morales (Tennessee), VISN Region 9 rural consultant; and Ron Schmidt (Wyoming), VISN Region 19 Rural Health Consultant. (Photo courtesy of Alison Hughes)

Regional, Annual Meeting Dates Set for 2010

The dates and locations for this year's ORHP regional meetings and the next NOSORH membership meeting have been set. Please mark the appropriate dates on your calendar now so you can join us:

- **May 18** – NOSORH Membership Meeting (6:00 p.m. EDT (tentative), Savannah, Georgia)
- **June 22-23** – Region D Meeting (Big Island, Hawaii)
- **July 6-8** – Region A Meeting (State College, Pennsylvania)
- **July 21-22** – Region C Meeting (St. Louis, Missouri)
- **August 3-5** – Region B Meeting (Williamsburg, Virginia)
- **August 31-September 1** – Region E Meeting (Astoria, Oregon)
- **November 16-18** – NOSORH Annual Meeting/ORHP SORH Grantees Meeting (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

Be sure to check the [News & Events](#) section of the NOSORH Web site periodically for additional meeting information.

The Annual Meeting Planning Committee invites anyone interested in helping plan the annual meeting - and NOSORH's 15th Anniversary celebration - to join its team. If you can participate in monthly phone meetings, have some ideas for meaningful meeting sessions and want to help, we'd love to hear from you. New NOSORH members are especially welcome! Contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) to learn more.

Contact Information

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Grant Writing Institute to Be Launched This April

Want to enhance your grant-writing skills and learn to use *rurality* to your advantage when submitting proposals? Are you interested in gaining additional grant-writing experience or even becoming a rural grant-writing educator in your state? Then the Rural Health Grant Writing Specialist program being offered by the NOSORH Grant Writing Institute is just the course for you!

Bi-monthly Webinar training sessions will be offered beginning in April. Two sessions developed around the same theme will be offered monthly, culminating with an intensive in-person training session held in conjunction with the NOSORH Annual Meeting. Participants can choose the track that meets their needs or participate in both! The Institute will also offer an optional "train-the-trainer" session for

those interested in educating grant writers in their own state.

Look for registration information to arrive soon. Be sure to consider applying for this one-of-a-kind training opportunity – and encourage other rural stakeholders in your state that you think may benefit from the course to apply as well! Contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) for additional information.

We're Here for You!

Want to plan webinars for rural areas in your state, but don't know where to start or have the technology? Putting together a FLEX grant application and need an outside reader? Thinking about developing a strategic communications plan for your State Office? Need a hand planning a new statewide rural health conference? Remember that NOSORH's staff stands ready to help your State Office meet its technical assistance needs. To learn more, contact NOSORH Director [Teryl Eisinger](#).

The NOSORH Educational Exchange program also offers mentoring, education, information exchange and technical assistance opportunities for SORHs. Visit the [Educational Exchange](#) section of the NOSORH Web site to learn how you can take advantage of these opportunities!

DHHS Unveils National Health Security Strategy

Secretary of Health & Human Services Kathleen Sebelius recently unveiled [The National Health Security Strategy](#) (NHSS), the nation's first comprehensive plan focused specifically on protecting people's health prior to, during, and after large-scale health incidents and emergencies. NHSS includes a strategy and implementation guide that defines and describes the vision for national health security and the strategic objectives and capabilities necessary to achieve that vision

Thanks to [Lynda Bergsma](#), director of the Arizona State Office of Rural Health Program, for representing NOSORH and the interests of SORHs during the development of this much-needed plan.

"Straight from the SORHs": News from the State Offices

If any new employees recently joined your SORH staff, please contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) so the Educational Exchange Committee can welcome them and let them know about the NOSORH educational exchange opportunities that are available to them. Also, please be sure to contact [Bill Hessert](#) about any staffing changes, awards or other news about your SORH so we can share the news with your NOSORH colleagues!

[Janice Cook](#) has been named HPSA coordinator of recruitment and retention for the **Alabama Office of Rural Health**. Janice, previously served as administrative director of the Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry.

April Conference Offers Solutions for Safety Net Providers: Representatives from State Offices of Rural Health, Rural Health Clinics and safety net providers are invited to attend: *The Forum 2010: Essential Perspectives for Safety Net Providers*, which will be held April 19-21 at the Red Lion Hotel in Aurora, Colorado. Co-sponsored by the [Colorado Rural Health Center](#), *The Forum 2010* will provide attendees with

unique education, training and networking opportunities focusing on health information technology; healthcare reform; RHC compliance, reimbursement and advocacy; and quality and performance improvement. [Click here](#) to obtain an agenda, hotel information and other registration/sponsorship materials. For additional information, please call (303.577.0373) or [email](#) Rich Marquez, RHC Program Coordinator for the Colorado Rural Health Center.

Proposed Connecticut Medical School to Emphasize Primary Care, Global Health Training: Quinnipiac University has announced plans to open a medical school that will emphasize training in primary care and global health. According to a [university press release](#), Quinnipiac hopes to enroll its first medical school class by the Fall 2013 or Fall 2014 semester.

Multimillion Grant to Enhance EMT, Hospital Personnel Training in South Dakota: South Dakota recently received a three-year, \$5.58 million grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to train

emergency medical technicians and hospital personnel throughout the state using high-tech patient simulators. Sandra Durick, director of the South Dakota Office of Rural Health and Halley Lee, manager of the Office's Healthcare Workforce Center, developed the grant application. The South Dakota Office of Rural Health will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the project.



(Left to Right) Gary Meyers (Trauma Program Manager, South Dakota Office of Rural Health), Travis Spier, RN, EMT-P (EMS Outreach Coordinator, Sanford Health) and Audra Evens (Administrative Assistant, South Dakota Office of Rural Health) conduct a demonstration on a mannequin used to train emergency medical technicians and hospital personnel in South Dakota.