
 Center for Rural Health
<http://ruralhealth.und.edu>

Working with State Legislators


SORH/NOSORH Annual Meeting
Pre-Conference - HIT for SORHs and Rural Health Partners
September 23, 2008 Travers City, MI

Lynette Dickson, MS, LRD
SORH Program Director

Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

 **Center for Rural Health**

- Established in 1980, at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND
- Focuses on:
 - Education, Training, & Resource Awareness
 - Community Development & Technical Assistance
 - Native American Health
 - Rural Health Workforce
 - Rural Health Research
 - Rural Health Policy
- Web site: <http://ruralhealth.und.edu>

 **North Dakota Legislature...**

Governor John Hoeven

- 47 Districts
District is about 13,000 people
- 47 State Senators
- 94 State Representatives
4 year terms for both Senate and House

North Dakota Legislature

- ND is unique in that basically all bills must receive a vote on the floor of the originating chamber and ND is rare in that its legislative assembly meets on a biannual basis.
- ND is rare in that it maintains a "citizen legislature"
- Legislative Council keeps the policy process in operation when the legislature is not in session
- Legislative Council can set the stage for future legislation
- Legislative Council maintains some level of bi-partisanship

ND Health Information Technology (HIT) Steering Committee Members

- **Center for Rural Health** – representing rural communities
- **Senator Kent Conrad's office** – representing federal government
- **ND State CIO** – representing state government interests
- **ND Department of Health**
- **ND Department of Human Services**
- **North Dakota Health Care Review** representing Quality Improvement Organization (QIO)
- **ND Medical Association** – representing physicians
- **ND Healthcare Association** – representing hospitals
- **ND BlueCross BlueShield** representing third-party payer
- **ND Health Information Management Association (HIMA)** representing health information management workforce
- **Gruby Technologies** – representing technology businesses
- **AARP** – representing consumers
- **Two large tertiary and two small rural hospitals** representing hospitals
- **ND Medical Group Managers Association** - representing clinics



• **VISION**
Implement a statewide health information technology and exchange infrastructure.

• **MISSION**
Facilitate the adoption and use of health information technology and exchange to improve healthcare quality, patient safety and overall efficiency of healthcare and public health services in North Dakota.




- **November, 2006** – Center for Rural Health developed a link on their website in order to provide a central location for sharing information on behalf of the Steering Committee <http://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/sorh/hit.php>
- **December, 2006** - Senator Judy Lee, Chair Senate Human Services Committee and Representative Clara Sue Price, Chair House Human Services Committee sponsored SB2303. Steering Committee members provided input and feedback.
- **January - February, 2007** - Testimony was provided in support of SB 2303 by Steering Committee members.
- **March, 2007** - Steering Committee held second face-to-face meeting. Purpose was to discuss progress of SB 2303; further develop goals and work groups.

SB 2303 was introduced during the 2007 legislative session to create the HIT Steering Committee and provide for a HIT grant program. When SB2303 failed, an amendment to HB 1021, ND Information Technology Department's appropriation bill was adopted. This amendment created the committee by adding a new section to the North Dakota Century Code 23-01. The grant program was not included.

Tips/Lessons Learned

- Keep it simple – written materials and presentations
- Use focus groups/interviews to query how legislators want to receive information
- Educate on the basics (EMR 101, HIT terminology, etc.)
- Provide data to strengthen request
- Share personal stories to make it real for them
- Have a variety of persons present to legislators
- Create talking points so message is consistent
- Use grassroots method for reaching all legislators



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For more information contact:

Center for Rural Health
University of North Dakota
School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037

Tel: (701) 777-3848
Fax: (701) 777-6779

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