



NACO Initiatives to Build Vitality in Rural Counties

NOSORH Meeting
*Building Vital Communities:
Harvesting Collaboration*
July 7, 2009



What is NACO?

- The only national organization that represents counties in the U.S.
- A full service organization serving America's 3,068 counties:
 - Research
 - Public Affairs Assistance
 - Enterprise Services
 - Legislative Affairs
 - Technical Assistance

www.naco.org



NACO's Restore the Partnership Campaign

- Goals:
 - Reestablish the partnership between governments—federal, state, local, and tribal
 - Educate the Administration and Congress about county issues and responsibilities
- Activities:
 - Hold educational forums for congressional staff
 - Oppose unfunded mandates and regulations that undermine local government decision making



NACo's Support to Rural Counties

- Nearly two-thirds of the nation's 3,068 counties are rural, with a population of approximately 60 million
- Rural Action Caucus (RAC): www.ruralcounties.org
- NACo's 11 Steering Committees:
 - Agriculture and Rural Affairs
 - Health
 - Others (i.e. Transportation, Community & Economic Development, etc.)

These steering committees and RAC drive NACo's rural-focused programs and policy priorities

NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC)

- RAC is the voice for America's rural counties before Congress, federal agencies and the Administration
- Bipartisan coalition of nearly 800 rural county officials
- Focused on addressing issues critical to rural areas:
 - Infrastructure development
 - Broadband deployment
 - Development of rural clinics and hospitals
 - Road/bridge construction/maintenance
 - Schools, business development opportunities, and other county responsibilities
 - Rural development title of the Farm Bill; NACo supports the Rural Collaborative Investment Program (RCIP)

Rural Development Campaign

- Formed by NACo; Chair Colleen Landkamer, NACo Past President
- Comprised of 28 diverse national groups (health, energy, education, government)
- Focused on promoting rural development and rural America's economic competitiveness
 - Disproportionate share of federal assistance to rural areas is provided through income security programs
 - Need more funding to build capacity of rural regions for economic and community growth



NACO's Healthy Counties Programs

- **Rural Health Works**
 - Funded through HHS, Office of Rural Health Policy
 - Currently working in:
 - Sumter County, AL
 - Idaho County, ID
 - Fulton County, PA
 - Prior work in:

Mason Co., WA	Pondera Co., MT
Grand Co., CO	Grand Co., UT
Adams Co., OH	Linn Co., MO
Summers Co., WV	Grimes Co., TX
Holmes Co., FL	
- **Childhood Obesity**
 - Funded through Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Leadership for Healthy Communities
 - Currently working in:
 - Cascade County, MT
 - Clinton County, MI
 - Douglas County, NE
 - Maricopa County, AZ

Rural Health Works

Goal: To strengthen rural economies through improvements to the local health system

- Perform an assessment and evaluation of local health system
- Determine the economic activity in terms of dollars and jobs produced by the health care sector
- Understand how the community uses health services, where they receive services, and their opinions regarding quality
- Compile a directory of health and human services provided in the county

Rural Health Issues

- Local health care services account for up to 20% of the rural economy
- 10% of physicians practice in rural areas, while about one-fourth of the population lives in these regions
- Proportion of uninsured and on Medicaid higher in rural areas than in urban or suburban areas
- Rural Americans more often report fair/poor health and are more often diagnosed with chronic conditions

Health Reform for Rural Counties

NACo supports comprehensive health reform legislation to ensure access to quality health care for all. Such legislation should strengthen the local health safety net, especially Medicaid; promote wellness and prevent injuries and disease and integrate behavioral health services

- Coverage and access issues both need to be addressed
- Strengthen rural public health infrastructure and focus on prevention and preparedness
- Rural Americans need better access to good quality physical and behavioral health care
- Rural health safety net should not be dismantled to pay for reform
 - Medicaid is an essential revenue source for rural providers

2009 Recovery Act and 2008 Farm Bill

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
 - Has provided funding for localities to address a backlog of projects
- 2008 Farm Bill: Rural Collaborative Investment Program (RCIP)
 - Model of flexibly funded regional approach to rural development

11

**USDA Rural Development
Community Facilities**

- USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Program
 - About 33% is invested in rural health care
- Dental Clinics
- Nursing Homes
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Physicians Clinics
- Boarding Homes for the Elderly
- Hospitals (General & Surgical)
- Medical Rehabilitation Centers
- Psychiatric Hospitals
- Outpatient Clinics

Ideas for Collaboration

- Rural Development Campaign
- NACo Affiliates
 - NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officials)
 - NACBHDD (National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Directors)
 - NACHFA (National Association of County Health Facility Administrators)
 - NALBOH (National Association of Local Boards of Health)
 - NACCED (National Association for County and Community Economic Development)
- NACo State Associations, state rural health associations, regional commissions
- Improve collaboration between government agencies working in rural areas



NACo contacts:

Anita Cardwell
Senior Associate, Community Services
Health & Human Services
202-942-4267
acardwell@naco.org

Maeghan Gilmore
Program Director, Community Services
Health, Human Services & Justice
202-942-4261
mgilmore@naco.org

Erik Johnston
Associate Legislative Director
Agriculture and Rural Affairs
202-942-4230
ejohnston@naco.org
