



## Office of Rural Health

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June 23, 2010  
NOSORH Region D Annual Meeting  
Waikoloa, Hawaii

Office of Rural Health  
Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Planning  
Veterans Health Administration

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### ORH Establishment



• In 2006, Congress created Office of Rural Health (ORH) by enacting Public Law 109-461 (also known as the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006).

• By March 2007, ORH was established within the Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (ADUSH) for Policy and Planning, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

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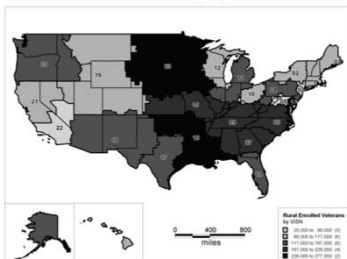


### Rural Veterans



• Of the 8 million Veterans enrolled within VA, ~40% of enrolled Veterans live in rural or highly rural areas.

Geographical Distribution of Enrolled Rural and Highly Rural Veterans by VISNs



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## ORH Mission



- To conduct, coordinate, promote, and disseminate studies and analyses of issues affecting Veterans living in rural and highly rural areas.
- To work with all VA personnel and offices to develop, refine, promulgate policies, best practices, lessons learned, and innovative and successful programs to improve care and services for enrolled rural/highly rural Veterans.

**• Areas of Focus:**

- Access and Quality
- Technology and Telehealth
- Studies and Analyses
- Education and Training
- Building Collaborations
- Workforce Recruitment and Retention

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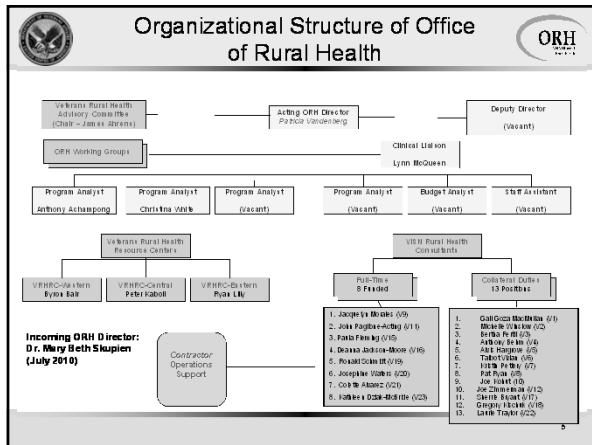
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## ORH Resources



- **Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers (VRHRCs)**
  - Three regional centers: White River Junction, VT; Iowa City, IA; Salt Lake City, UT
  - Function as field-based clinical laboratories for demonstration projects/pilot projects
  - Serve as rural health experts
  - Act as educational and clinical repositories
  - Provide programmatic support to ORH
- **VISN Rural Consultants (VRCs)**
  - Serve as primary interface between ORH and VISN rural activities
  - Develop rural health service plans based on VISN-wide needs assessments
  - Facilitate information sharing across the VISNs
  - Perform outreach to develop community relationships
- **Veterans' Rural Health Advisory Committee (VRHAC)**
  - Federal advisory committee to the Secretary of VA
  - Evaluate current program activities and identify barriers to providing service
  - Advise the VA Secretary

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### ORH Strategic Goals



- **Improve access and quality of care for rural and highly rural Veterans.**
- **Optimize the use of available and emerging technologies to enhance services to Veterans residing in rural and highly rural areas.**
- **Maximize the utilization of existing and emerging studies and analyses to impact care delivered to rural and highly rural Veterans.**
- **Improve availability of education and training for VA and non-VA service providers to rural and highly rural Veterans.**
- **Enhance existing and implement new strategies to improve collaboration to increase service options for rural and highly rural Veterans.**
- **Develop innovative methods to identify, recruit and retain medical professionals and requisite expertise in rural and highly rural communities.**

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### ORH Initiatives



- **In FY2009, Public Law (P.L.) 110-329 provided \$250 million to support service expansion and outreach initiatives within VA ranging from the national to local level:**
- **Key Major Initiative Categories Include:**
  - \$86 million - National & Local Telehealth Expansion Initiatives
  - \$43 million - National & Local Home Based Primary Care Initiatives
  - \$21 million - Local Outreach Clinic Expansion
  - \$13 million - Local Community Outreach
  - \$10 million - National Mental Health Programs
  - \$ 6 million - Local Transportation Programs
- **In FY10, the Veterans Health Administration provided ORH with an additional \$250 million to continue supporting initiatives that improve access and quality care to rural Veterans via service expansion and outreach initiatives.**

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### ORH Collaborations



- **Several P.L. 110-329 projects featuring community collaborations include:**
  - Indian Health Service Collaboration
  - CBOCs Expansions and Community Collaborations
  - Transportation Studies and Expansion
  - Telehealth Expansion
  - Educational Outreach and Training
    - Rural Health Professions Institute
    - Geriatric Scholars Program
    - Patient Navigator Programs

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### Rural CBOCs



- Funding for rural health was designated for the implementation of 51 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) that were slated for FY 2010 activation that are located in counties that were determined to be 100 percent rural.
- ORH allocated \$32.1 million and VHA allocated \$30 million for a total investment of \$62.1 million in FY 2010 and VHA will invest an additional \$82.1 million in FY 2011 for a two year total of \$149.9 million.
  - Planned VA CBOCs identified for Region D
    - Craig County (Vinita), OK
    - Susanville, CA
    - Lake County, CA

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### ORH Initiatives Located in Region D



- Home-Based Primary Care
- Community Collaboration
- Indian Health Service Collaboration
- Medical Foster Home
- Geriatric/Long-Term Care
- Educational Outreach and Training
- Mental Health

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Region D States: AZ, CA, HI, NV, NM, OK and TX

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### ORH Initiatives Located in Region D



- Telehealth
- Transportation Expansion
- Homeless Veterans
- Pharmacological Services
- Outreach Clinics
- Community-Based Outreach Clinics

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Region D States: AZ, CA, HI, NV, NM, OK and TX

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**Future Directions for ORH**



- **Improving knowledge base**
  - Continue improving understanding of rural and highly rural Veterans and their needs
  - Implementing best practices and program evaluations of current initiatives
  - Implementing evidence-based strategies and innovative care delivery models
- **Improving capacity to care for rural and highly rural Veterans**
  - Lessons learned from each year's experience
  - Growing infrastructure; emphasizing local innovation with national focus
  - Building community collaborations and leveraging technology
- **Improving access and quality of care**
  - Improve coordination both inside and outside VA
  - Operationalize best practices – nationalizing models that work
  - Expand services and improve outreach

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**QUESTIONS?**



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**Contact Information**



**For further information please contact:**

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