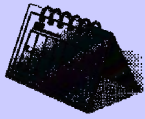


Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

April 2010

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



April 1

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

April 5

- Ready Response Planning Team (2:00 p.m. EDT)

April 7

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

April 13

- Development Committee (2:00 p.m. EDT)

April 15

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

April 19

- HIT Committee (Noon EDT)

April 20

- Policy Committee (2:00 p.m. EDT)

April 22

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

April 27

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

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

See You in Savannah!



Heading to NRHA's 33rd Annual Rural Health Conference in Savannah? Then plan to attend the NOSORH membership meeting tentatively scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on May 18. A meeting location and the meeting agenda will be posted soon on our [Calendar of Events](#).

NOSORH will also host a display table throughout the conference. If you would like to share information about your SORH or could lend a hand staffing the display, please contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) as soon as possible. All display materials must be sent to Stephanie no later than May 7.

Wikispace, Listservs, Social Networks Available to NOSORH Members

Did you know that NOSORH has several e-communication vehicles available for sharing information and generating discussions?

NOSORH maintains a [Wikispace](#) where members can participate in more involved online discussions and share examples of their work. If you're interested in chatting with several SORHs simultaneously, have a lot of information to share and want to limit your number of incoming emails, then Wikispace is the choice for you!

NOSORH also maintains several listservs that members can use to send messages to members or groups of members (i.e., SORH directors, FLEX coordinators, NOSORH committees, members by ORHP region). Make sure your name is included in the [SORH Member Directory](#) and send your message using your email address listed in the directory; otherwise, the message will require moderator approval. Attachments can be sent along with your message, but any message larger than 256KB also will be

held for moderator approval. Also, **please** be considerate of other members and use "Reply All" as sparingly as possible. Additional information on the Wikispace and the listservs can be found in our [Member Resources/Other](#) section on the Web.

We're also on Twitter and Facebook! Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/NOSORH>; on Facebook, search for NOSORH from your home page and sign up to become a fan. Staying in touch was never so easy!

Let's Be Clear: Clarifying the Network Planning Grant Guidance

Speaking of the listserv, there was some confusion in a recent NOSORH-all listserv exchange about whether letters of support from SORHs were "required documentation" in a recent Federal network planning grant application. A review of the grant guidance indicates a SORH letter of support was not required, but copies of any letters sent to a SORH and any responses received could be included as attachments. The guidance *encouraged* applicants to notify their SORH or other state agency (i.e., Single Point of Contact) of their intent to apply.

The discussion also revealed some interesting statistics regarding SORHs' responses to requests for letters of support. Of the SORHs that replied, 27 always respond to letter of support requests. Other SORHs indicated they ask for more information and do not supply a letter of support unless specific information is provided, while at least one provides acknowledgement letters. One also has a process in place for getting approval to submit a letter of support if the application is questionable, but it says that situation has never occurred.



Good luck, Captain! Nancy Egbert, a captain in the U.S. Public Health Service, senior clinical adviser for the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and ORHP Region E Liaison, points on a map to where she will be spending most of her time now that she has retired. Good luck Nancy and thanks for everything you've done to support the State Offices of Rural Health throughout your career!

Dates Set for 2010 Regional, Annual Meetings

The dates and locations for this year's ORHP regional meetings and NOSORH annual meeting have been set!

- **June 23-24** – Region D Meeting (Waikoloa, 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 15-17 (tentative)** – NOSORH Annual Meeting/ORHP SORH Grantees Meeting (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

Please mark the appropriate dates on your calendar and plan on joining us! Also be sure to check the [News & Events](#) section of the NOSORH Web site periodically for agendas, registration details and additional meeting information.

NOSORH Joins Health Professions Network

NOSORH has joined the Health Professions Network (HPN), a confederation of allied health organizations that works together on issues relevant to workforce development and the delivery of health care in the United States. Additional information about the organization is available on the [HPN Web site](#).

Thanks to Kris Juliar, director of the Montana Office of Rural Health, for making this connection on NOSORH's behalf.

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“Straight from the SORHs”: News from the State Offices and ORHP



[Lisa Davis](#), director of the **Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health**, has been selected to participate in the 2010 Pennsylvania Political Leaders Fellowship program. The fellowship, a leadership development program offered by the Center for Progressive

Leadership, equips up-and-coming leaders with the skills and resources they need to advance progressive political change in their states and communities. Lisa says she has no plans to run for public office but will instead use the fellowship to prepare her to “conduct grassroots advocacy focusing on rural healthcare.”

[Jennifer Kelly](#) has been named interim director of the **Maryland State Office of Rural Health**. She replaces Sarah Orth, who recently stepped down to accept a position with the Maryland Health Care Commission.

The Iowa Department of Public Health recently released the **Iowa Center for Rural Health and Primary Care 2010 Annual Report**. In addition to sharing

state data, national information and program information affecting medically underserved and rural areas of Iowa with readers, the document highlights the organizations, initiatives and promising practices that are making a difference in the lives of rural and underserved Iowa residents. [Click here](#) to view or download a copy of the report. For more information, contact [Gloria Vermie](#).

Please contact [Bill Hessert](#) with any staffing changes, awards or other news about you or your SORH that we can share with your NOSORH colleagues! Also, please let [Stephanie Hansen](#) know when any new employees join your staff so the Educational Exchange Committee can welcome them and share information about NOSORH's various educational exchange opportunities.

NOSORH Preparing SORHs to Respond to Healthcare Reform

During its annual planning meeting in January, the NOSORH Board of Directors adopted a series of “high-priority activities” designed to increase awareness and expand the capacity of SORHs in the coming year. One of those activities called for the planning and launching of a “Ready Response” Team, a multi-committee group that informs and equips SORHs to respond to workforce, HIT and quality issues related to health reform.

“This great idea will help State Offices take advantage of more funding opportunities, plan programs proactively and be well informed stakeholders on rural health policy issues,” notes NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger. “The hope is that the team will be available ‘on demand’ to provide information and answers that enable SORHs to take action. It may even allow us to tap into the expertise of SORH alumni and other partners more regularly.”

The Ready Response Planning Team will hold its first meeting on April 5. Stay tuned for more details on how the team can help your Office respond to health reform issues in your state!

FYI: Upcoming Training Workshops/Programs of Interest

Several partners recently announced training programs and workshops that may be of interest to NOSORH members.

The **National Center for Rural Health Works (RHW)** will conduct training workshops for professionals/organizations that help assess the economic impact, feasibility and healthcare needs of their rural communities and hospitals. This year's Eastern Regional Training Workshop will be held May 5 in Nashville, Tennessee; this year's Western Regional Training Workshop will take place July 7 in Reno, Nevada. Additional information and registration forms can be found on the [RHW Web site](#).

The **Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)** will offer two one-day training sessions to help USAC Rural Health Care (RHC) Program applicants understand how to apply for and receive RHC support. Current program participants can also attend either session on April 6 at USAC's office in Washington, DC or May 15 (the day before the American Telemedicine Association conference) in San Antonio, Texas. Visit the [USAC Web site](#) to learn more.

NOSORH Seeks Speaker Recommendations

NOSORH is assembling a list of speakers to share with SORHs and other groups looking for someone to speak at an upcoming meeting or conference. If there is a speaker you would like to recommend, please forward that person's information to [Bill Hessert](#). We will be posting contact information and a brief description of each speaker by topic/area of expertise in the [Member Resources](#) section of the NOSORH Web site in the next few weeks.

Coming Soon: Community Success Stories

Over the past several months, NOSORH has been collecting stories highlighting the innovative and heart-warming ways rural communities have been improving health care for their residents. Be sure to check the [Member Resources/Reports](#) section in the coming weeks for a list of, and links to, the stories that we have compiled!

FCC Releases National Broadband Plan

On March 16, the Federal Communications Commission released its long-awaited National Broadband Plan. The plan includes 25 pages devoted to health care and provides 11 recommendations for expanding the use of telemedicine and health technology.

Visit the American Telemedicine Association Web site for links to the [health portion of the plan](#) and its [health-specific recommendations](#).