

Mark your Calendar!



March 4

Workforce Committee
(Noon EST)

March 9

Partnership
Champions Proposals
Due

March 10

Performance Measures Committee (1:00 p.m. EST)

March 23

Educational Exchange Committee (2:00 p.m. EST)

March 27

“Partnering for Rural Food Safety: State and National Roles” (3:00-4:30 p.m. EST)

See [flyer](#) for additional information; those who cannot attend are encouraged to complete the survey.

May 5

NOSORH Membership meeting at NRHA Conference (3:00 p.m. EST)

May 5-8

[32nd Annual NRHA Rural Health Conference](#); Fontainebleau Resort, Miami Beach, Florida

Additional information can be obtained in the [NOSORH Related Events](#) section of the Web site.

The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

February 2009



SORH Funding Included in 2009 Labor/HHS Appropriations

“Provided further, That notwithstanding section 338J(k) of the PS Act, \$9,201,000 is available for State Offices of Rural Health.”

This sentence – included in the Labor/Health & Human Services Appropriations language recently released by the U.S. House/Senate Appropriations Committee – is certainly “a sight for SORH eyes!” Simply put, inclusion of this sentence ensures continued federal funding for SORHs in FY2009 provided Congress passes the appropriations bill as expected in the next 1-2 weeks. The language as presented eliminates any funding cap issues related to Title 42 (the legislation which

established and funds SORHs) for the current fiscal year.

While this is welcome news, it is important to note that the appropriation only guarantees SORH funding in FY2009. For that reason, NOSORH will continue focusing its attention over the next several weeks/months on securing continued funding via a reauthorization of the SORH program. Be sure to check future Branch issues for updates.

A special thank you to everyone

who has provided their support and assistance throughout this process, including: John Barnas (Michigan), Lisa Davis (Pennsylvania) and members of the NOSORH Policy Committee; NOSORH Legislative Liaison Bill Finerfrock; Gloria Vermie and the staff of the Iowa Office of Rural Health; and Alan Morgan, Tim Fry and the staff of the National Rural Health Association.

Mary Wakefield Named HRSA Administrator

NOSORH is delighted to report that President Barack Obama has chosen long-time rural health champion Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN, director of the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota, to lead the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Dr. Wakefield will assume her responsibilities as HRSA administrator on March 10.

Dr. Wakefield will lead a 1,400-employee, \$7-billion agency responsible for administering many of the federal government programs that provide critical healthcare service to millions of uninsured and underserved Americans. She also will oversee HRSA’s implementation of its

share of the economic stimulus package – approximately \$2.5 billion for investment in healthcare infrastructure and training healthcare professionals.

“As a nurse, a Ph.D., and a leading rural healthcare advocate, Mary Wakefield brings expertise that will be instrumental in expanding and improving services for those who are currently uninsured or underserved,” President Obama said when announcing Dr. Wakefield’s appointment.

We couldn’t agree more – and we look forward to working with Dr. Wakefield on improving the health status of underserved citizens for years to come. Please join NOSORH in congratulating



Dr. Wakefield on her prestigious accomplishment.

[Click here](#) to read the White House press release announcing Dr. Wakefield’s appointment.

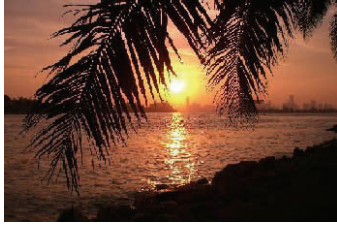
Members Asked to Comment, Vote on Proposed Dues Increase

The NOSORH Board of Directors would like to remind NOSORH members to share any comments or concerns regarding the proposed increase in dues from \$500 to \$1,000 with their Regional

Representatives no later than Wednesday, March 4. Members will receive electronic ballots to vote on the proposed dues increase by March 27; results will be announced no later than April 15.

[Click here](#) to view a list of current NOSORH Regional Representatives.

32nd Annual NRHA Rural Health Conference



NOSORH will once again hold a membership meeting in conjunction with the 32nd Annual NRHA Rural Health Conference. This year's meeting will take place at the Fontainebleau Resort at 3:00 p.m. on May 5 (meeting room site to be determined).

We are also in need of volunteers to help, set up, staff and tear down NOSORH's display in the exhibit area on May 5 and 6.

Please contact [Donna Pfaendtner](#) if you are planning to attend the conference and can lend a hand (see available times below). Lastly, please contact Donna if you will be making a presentation or presenting a poster session during the Rural Health Conference. We want to share your good news!

Available Times

Tuesday, May 5th

2:00—2:45 PM (Set-up)
5:00—7:00 PM

Wednesday, May 6th

7:00—7:45 AM
10:30—11:00 AM
12:15—4:00 PM
4:15—5:00 PM (Tear down)

You're Invited!

As most of you know, one of NOSORH's closest friends, **Serge Dihoff**, recently announced his retirement. To honor his years of dedicated service, the North Carolina Office of Rural Health and Community Care will host a retirement celebration for Serge on Friday, March 6. NOSORH members are invited to the celebration; [click here](#) for additional information.

Congratulations and good luck, Serge – you will be missed!

Call for Volunteers

NOSORH is seeking volunteers who would like to participate in a panel presentation on SORH programs at the APHA Annual Meeting, which will be held November 7-11 in Philadelphia.

Please contact [Betty King](#) before March 16 if you are member of APHA and/or planning to attend the APHA Annual meeting want to be and part of the panel. You can also contact Betty if you are interested in receiving updates on rural developments within APHA or to share information about existing partnerships with public health association affiliates in your state.

HHS Seeks Advisory Board Nominations

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is looking for qualified professionals to fill several vacancies on its Advisory Committee on Interdisciplinary, Community-Based Linkages (ACICBL). The ACICBL provides policy and program development advice and recommendations to

the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Congress on matters related to Area Health Education Centers; Health Education and Training Centers; Geriatric Education and Training Programs; Quentin N. Burdick Program for Rural Interdisciplinary Training; and entities engaged in education

and training for Allied Health and Other Disciplines. Additional information and a nomination form can be obtained by [clicking here](#).

Please submit your nomination form to [Donna Pfaendtner](#) by March 13 if you would like NOSORH to consider your nomination for endorsement.

"Partnership Champions" Proposals Due March 9

NOSORH members have until March 9 to submit proposals to NOSORH's "Partnership Champions for NOSORH Priority Areas" program.

"Partnership Champions" seeks to seed the creation of regional and/or national partnerships that support the work of NOSORH and State Offices of Rural Health. The program specifically targets partnerships which address one or more of NOSORH's seven key priority areas: uninsured populations; small rural hospitals/critical access hospitals; emergency medical services; health workforce; mental health; oral health; and health information technology. NOSORH will award a total of \$15,000 to approximately three "Partnership Champions" grant recipients.

[Click here](#) to access the "Partnership Champions" RFP on the NOSORH Web site.

Annual Conference Committee Seeking Input

Do you have a presenter, exhibitor or sponsor suggestion for the upcoming NOSORH Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas? Please be sure to share that information with [Donna Pfaendtner](#) or any member of the Annual Conference Planning Committee (Graham Adams, Theresa Cruz, Scott Daniels, Lisa Davis, Lynette Dickson, Caroline Ford, Karen Madden, Gloria Vermie).

Anyone interested in planning the next conference is invited to join the planning committee's next conference call. Visit the [NOSORH Related Events](#) section of the Web site to find the next meeting date and obtain call-in information.

Upcoming Webinar Information

The Educational Exchange Committee is planning an April Webinar focusing primarily on health care reform. Jennifer Tolbert, principal policy analyst for the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, will provide a national perspective on state health care reform, while representatives from the Iowa and Massachusetts offices of rural health will present lessons learned while implementing reform measures in their states. Please contact [Betty King](#) if you are working on health care reform in your state and have not already responded to her request for information

The Communications Committee is also planning a **May 14** Webinar entitled "Getting the Rural Voice Heard: External Communications Strategies." Stay tuned for more information!

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