

Mark your Calendar!



June 30—July 2

Region A Meeting (Lake Placid, NY)

July 1

Workforce Committee (Noon. EDT)

July 2

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

July 7

Webinar: *National Health Care Reform and the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act* (3:00 p.m. EDT)

Special Meeting: *Building Vital Communities: Harvesting Collaboration* (Lawrence, KS)

July 8-9

Region C Meeting (Lawrence, KS)

July 14

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

Development Committee (3:00 p.m. EDT)

July 21

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

July 23

Webinar: *Program Evaluation 101* (1:00 p.m. EDT)

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

July 27

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

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

June 2009



NOSORH Adopts Policy Platform

On June 17, the NOSORH Board of Directors adopted a Policy Platform that emphasizes NOSORH's seven priority areas and will be used to guide the organization's activities and responses for addressing those areas.

NOSORH members can also use the Policy Platform as a resource when trying to increase the awareness of government and public health officials, new staff and other key stakeholders on rural health issues.

A copy of the entire Policy Platform is available by [clicking here](#). Copies of the platform overview, individual policy statements by priority area and Policy Platform talking points will also be available soon on the

Special Workshops Planned in Coming Months

Over the next several months, NOSORH will host or co-host several meetings and workshops of interest for its members:

- **July 7** – *Building Vital Communities: Harvesting Collaboration*. A one-day workshop designed to build a framework for collaboration among local, state, regional and national organizations that benefit rural communities. SORH, USDA Rural Development, Cooperative Extension Service and Rural Economic Development leaders and anyone vested in helping build vital rural communities should plan to attend. [Click here](#) for an agenda.
- **August 5**– *Are We Making a Difference: Putting Program Evaluation into Practice*. This informative three hour workshop will teach participants how to define the scope of their program evaluation; identify the re-

sources needed to conduct a program evaluation; track progress; and implement findings from their program evaluation. Those attending will be asked to provide share examples of program evaluation in their SORHs and any “real world” challenges they faced.

- **August 18**– *Rural Health Workforce: Strategies in the Age of Health Reform*. A one-day conference exploring workforce as a key challenge in health reform and opportunities for workforce improvement as the result of economic stimulus funding. SORH, Department of Labor, Workforce Investment, AHEC and community college representatives should plan to attend. [Click here](#) for a draft agenda.
- **August 25-26**– *SORH/EMS Learning Session*. For the third consecutive year, the Joint Committee on Emergency Care – a joint effort of NOSORH and the National Association of State

EMS officials – will hold a rural EMS learning session. Among other topics, the day and a half-long workshop will address leadership development in EMS; the changing role of state EMS; issues related to rural EMS and trauma; and current EMS-related research. [Click here](#) for a draft agenda.

- **November 17**– “Improving HIT for Rural America” One-day HIT workshop for SORHs and their partners. SORH members, state Department of Information Technology representatives, network leaders and HIT experts and implementers are encouraged to attend.

NOSORH members may attend any of these special meetings. Additional information can be found in the [NOSORH Related Events](#) section on the NOSORH Web site.

NOSORH Keeps Its Finger on the Pulse of HIT Economic Stimulus Funding, Health

NOSORH is making sure that the voice of rural health voice resonates in Washington in the ongoing health reform and economic stimulus funding debates. During the past several months, NOSORH has:

- Submitted a letter [supporting SORH re-appropriation and re-authorization](#) to ranking members of Congress;

- Made a series of recommendations for [using economic stimulus funds to support rural Health Information Technology initiatives](#);

- Worked with the Rural Health Resource Center and the Rural HIT Coalition to develop responses to requests for public comment on [proposed FCC broadband guidelines](#), [proposed HIT Extension Center guidelines](#) and the definition of “meaningful use.”

- Joined the National Rural Health Association and other rural health partners urging congressional leaders [to promote rural America in ongoing health reform discussions](#).

Special thanks to members of the NOSORH Policy and Health Information Technology committees and our partner organizations for their roles in helping us identify these opportunities and develop our responses.

Award Nominations Now Being Accepted

The Awards Committee has announced that it is now accepting NOSORH Awards nominations for 2009. NOSORH presents six annual awards to SORHs, NOSORH members and other rural health friends and stakeholders. [Award Descriptions](#) and a [List of Previous Award Winners](#) are both available in the Awards Committee section of the NOSORH Web site.

Please download a copy of the [2009 NOSORH Awards Nomination Form](#) if you would like to nominate an individual or SORH; all nominations should be submitted by September 11, 2009. Contact [Alison Hughes](#) for more information.

SORH Comings and Goings

Don Beckwith, health program manager for the Utah Office of Primary Care and Rural Health for more than six years, retired from his position as of June 11. Don's retirement plans include walking his dogs; sitting, relaxing and enjoying life; and having a good time playing his tamburitz and teaching music.

Chip Cooper has resigned his position as rural health manager for the New Hampshire Office of Rural Health and Primary Care to become the quality and research coordinator for the New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. Although he officially left his position June 18, Chip plans on continuing to be involved with rural health as the New Hampshire's SORH EMS Liaison.

Lastly, **Tammy Chadd** has announced that she will be leaving state government and her position as director of the Indiana State Office of Rural Health on Thursday, July 2. As Tammy says, "I will be going on a new adventure in the managed care world and am looking forward to the new challenge. ...Thank you for your support and encouragement during my tenure. I will miss you, but am sure our paths will cross in the future."

Good luck in the next chapters of your lives, Don, Chip and Tammy – and thank you for your contributions to NOSORH and rural health!

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Legislative Update: Health Reform Debate Continues

Formal consideration of healthcare reform legislation began the week of June 15 when the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee began a formal "mark-up" of *The Affordable Health Choices Act*. This legislation would make major changes in the way we purchase and pay for health insurance.

Committee consideration of *The Affordable Health Choices Act* is expected to continue after the July 4 recess; at that time, the Senate Fi-

nance Committee and the House committees charged with writing healthcare reform (HCR) legislation are also expected to begin their formal deliberations. Once the Senate and House committees have completed their actions on their respective pieces of the HCR legislation, the various pieces will have to be put together into a single piece of legislation.

The process of producing a final HCR bill will take longer than many had

hoped; even though President Obama has urged Congress to complete work on the legislation before its August recess, it is not likely that this goal will be met. It is also unclear whether Congress can produce a bill that meets the President's reform goals while also meeting his cost-savings goals.

Please contact NOSORH Legislative Liaison [Bill Finerfrock](#) for more information.

July Webinars Examine Rural Health Workforce, Program Evaluation

Interested in learning what implications economic stimulus funding and ongoing health reform efforts will have on the rural health workforce? Then join the *National Healthcare Reform and the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act: Implications for the Health Workforce Webinar* at 3:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, July 7. Plans are also being made to hold a Program Evaluation 101 Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EDT on Thursday, July 23. The Webinar seeks to help participants define common terms used in program evaluation; identify resources and skills for conducting basic program evaluation; identify approaches and techniques for conducting basic program evaluation; design a basic program evaluation strategy and discuss adoption of a recommended NOSORH evaluation strategy

Visit [NOSORH Related Events](#) on the NOSORH Web site regularly for call-in instructions and additional informa-

Looking to Reduce Your Carry Forward? Help is Available

Seventeen SORHs appeared to have \$10,000 or more in carry forward funds from their ORHP State Office of Rural Health grants at the end of last fiscal year, while nine SORHs appeared to have \$50,000 or more in carry forward funds from FLEX grants.

For those SORHs that find themselves in a similar situation we can help. NOSORH can connect you with a low carry forward SORH that can share best practices for reducing your carry forward. There will be a grants management roundtable at the NOSORH Annual Meeting and developing additional strategies for reducing carry forward funds.

Please contact [Betty King](#) if you would like more information or would like to connect with a low carry forward SORHs.

Dues Reminder

Just a quick reminder that membership dues invoices, requests to update the membership directory and a member services survey were sent last week. NOSORH members are asked to submit their dues payment, update their directory information and complete the member services form as close to July 1 as possible.

We are honored that all 50 State Offices of Rural Health currently belong to NOSORH. Supporting the efforts of each SORH, after all, is a critical part of our mission – by helping improve the capacity of each SORH, NOSORH helps improve the health of all rural Americans. We have accomplished a lot, but there is much more that we can accomplish. By renewing your membership today, you'll ensure that our collective rural voices will continue to be heard loud and clear!

Please contact [Teryl Eisinger](#) ASAP if you have any dues-related questions or have concerns about meeting the July 1 deadline.

Bergsma Receives National Accolades

Dr. Lynda Bergsma, director of the Arizona Rural Health Office, has received a 2009 Cable's Leaders in Learning Award from Cable in the Classroom, the national education foundation of the U.S. cable industry. Founded in 1989, Cable in the Classroom fosters the use of cable content and technology to expand and enhance learning for children and youth in the United States.

Bergsma was honored for using media literacy education throughout her career as a health promotion strategy for children, youth and families. She and nine other 2009 award recipients were honored at a June 10 luncheon and ceremony hosted by Food Network Chef Alton Brown in Washington, D.C.

NOSORH to Meet at ORHP Grantees Partnership Meeting

NOSORH will exhibit information about SORH at this year's ORHP Grantees Partnership Meeting and hold a membership meeting in conjunction with this

year's meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 30; stay tuned for a meeting location. If you have information you'd like displayed about your SORH please

Development Committee Update

The NOSORH Development Committee is moving forward with plans to offer a Grant Writing Certification program in the near future and is also exploring strategies for developing relationships with potential sponsors. Please contact [Graham Adams](#) if you are interested in becoming a member of the committee or know of any potential sponsors.

bring to the meeting or ship in advance to NOSORH. Contact [Donna Pfaendtner](#) for more information.