

## Mark your Calendar!



# The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

March 2009



### April 1

Workforce Committee  
(Noon EDT)

### April 8

Delaware Rural Health  
Initiative Workshop  
(Georgetown, DE)

### April 9

ORHP Webinar on  
Additional SORH  
Funding (3:30 p.m.  
EDT)

### April 14

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

### April 27

Webinar: *State Health  
Care Reform: The  
Agony and the Ecstasy*  
(12:30 p.m. EDT)

### April 28

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

### May 5

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

### May 5-8

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

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

## BE PREPARED ... for Additional SORH Funding

Heads up! The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will soon announce an opportunity for SORHs to request FY 09 funds *in addition* to the \$150,000 already requested in their FY 09 SORH grant applications. Approximately \$700,000 is available and SORHs may request up to \$30,000 in additional Federal funds. However, final award amounts may be lower depending on the number of requests received. Also, please remember that all requests must still include state matching (3:1) funds.

Interested SORHs should be prepared

to submit a written request along with a revised budget and budget justification (for Federal and state matching funds) within two weeks of the formal announcement. SORHs that *anticipate* having a significant amount of unobligated FY 08 funds at the end of current grant year (June 30, 2009) are encouraged not to request this supplemental funding.

NOSORH wants to remind SORHs that they may utilize additional funding to offset the NOSORH dues increase (\$500 more) or perhaps enroll a staff person in the NOSORH Leadership

Institute (\$2,000). A Webinar will be held at 3:30 p.m. EDT on Thursday, April 9 to provide additional information and answer any questions SORHs may have regarding additional funding. Be sure to check the [Calendar of Events](#) on the NOSORH Web site for call-in information.

A special thank you to ORHP for seeking NOSORH's input regarding the allocation of additional FY 09 SORH funds.

## Denny Berens Goes to the White House

Denny Berens, director of the Nebraska State Office of Rural Health and incoming NRHA president, was one of the select few community leaders, healthcare advocates and "everyday Americans" invited to attend President Barack Obama's *White House Forum for Health Reform* held on March 5 in Washington, D.C. Participants joined President Obama, members of the Cabinet and members of Congress for a candid, productive discussion on lowering healthcare costs and expanding coverage for all Americans.

"The excitement of being a rural representative among this group was phenomenal," Berens shared about the experience. "In the past, it was rare that rural would even be represented in this group."

Based on comments made by President Obama and others during the Forum, Berens said it was pretty evident that "something" will happen relatively soon in terms of health reform. "I'm cautiously optimistic that this is the year we will begin to

go down the path of reform," he said. "It's exciting to see the President and legislators move in that direction. But that's just half the equation - it's now up to us to talk collectively and crystallize our messages to make sure the rural voice is heard."

A summary report of the *White House Forum for Health Reform* and other information on President Obama's plans for reforming health care can be found at [HealthReform.gov](#).

## Congratulations, Donna!

NOSORH is pleased to announce that Donna Pfaendtner, our part-time program assistant for the past several years, has been promoted to administrative coordinator and is now a full-time NOSORH employee!

Donna has worked tirelessly on behalf of NOSORH since joining our team, and we couldn't be happier to have her on board full-time.



## NOSORH Membership Votes to Accept Dues Increase

NOSORH membership recently voted to approve a \$500 dues increase beginning in FY 09. Of the 40 members who voted (80%), 33 (82.5%) voted in favor of the increase.

## Good Luck, Henry!

Henry Gerding recently retired after six years with New Jersey State Office of Rural Health to spend more time skiing, flying, travelling and pursuing his many other interests. Please email [Justine Ceserano](#) if you would like to send along any well wishes to Henry.

## NOSORH Set to Launch Leadership Institute

The inaugural NOSORH Leadership Institute, a program designed to enhance the leadership and management skills of emerging and established SORH employees, will officially launch with the program's first in April.

Any SORH employee who has primary or management responsibilities for core functions of his or her SORH. Those selected will be expected to participate in seven Webinars, attend a capstone face-to-face workshop at the NOSORH Annual Meeting in November and complete a rural health project using leadership skills developed throughout the Institute.

The cost to participate in the Institute is \$2,000, which covers all educational materials, mentoring and technical support costs. In addition, participants (or their SORH) are responsible for all travel costs incurred to attend the face-to-face workshop.

Check your e-mail next week for an application, a course description and a set of frequently asked questions. Applications must be returned by April 22 to be considered for this year's Leadership Institute.

### Contact Information

[Teryl Eisinger](#)

Director

(586) 739-9940

[Betty King](#)

Program Specialist

(520) 319-0113

[Bill Hessert](#)

Communications Coordinator

(814) 231-1213

[Donna Pfaendtner](#)

Administrative Coordinator

(586) 336-4627

## See You at the Beach!

NOSORH will hold a membership meeting during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual NRHA Rural Health Conference in Miami Beach, Florida. The meeting will take place May 5 at 3:00 p.m. in the Fleur de Lis Room at the Fontainebleau Resort.

We are also still looking for volunteers to help, set up, staff and tear down NOSORH's display in Exhibit



Hall on May 5 and 6. Please contact [Donna Pfaendtner](#) if you are attending the conference and can lend a hand. Available times include:

### 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)

Last but certainly not least, please contact Donna if you are making a presentation or presenting a poster during the Rural Health Conference. We want to share your good news!

## Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care Is Up and Running

The Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (JCREC) – a collaborative undertaking between NOSORH and the National Association of State EMS Officials – held its first conference call meeting on March 5.

JCREC seeks to develop a stronger, more comprehensive approach to improving the quality of emergency care in rural and frontier communities. During its monthly meetings, the committee will discuss key EMS policies, share best practices in EMS leadership and address the utilization of EMS personnel in alternative settings to enhance the delivery of preventive and primary healthcare services. Planned activities for 2009 include

developing a national directory of EMS medical director and ambulance director training programs (by state); developing a joint “Rural EMS Policy Agenda”; and supporting the growth of the International Roundtable on Paramedicine. JCREC will also sponsor the third SORH/EMS Learning Session in conjunction with this year's [National Rural EMS Summit](#) in Park City, Utah on August 25.

JCREC meets via conference call the first Thursday of each month at 3:00 EDT. Anyone interested in joining the call may do so by dialing (888) 447-7153 and entering passcode number 547904.

## Performance Measures Progress Report

The Performance Measures Committee (PMC) is working diligently with Matt Chandler (Performance Management Institute) and John Gale (Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine) to develop a set of meaningful, relevant performance measures that clearly demonstrate the national and state impact of the SORH Program. PMC has embraced five key measures that it believes illustrate the core SORH objectives:

1. Technical assistance
2. Information dissemination
3. Funding leveraged/matched
4. Relationships, linkages, champions or partnerships developed, strengthened and leveraged
5. Recruitment and retention

Essential upcoming next steps in the process include identifying measurements; creating definitions; developing a Web-based collection system; and recruiting pilot SORHs. Please watch for an e-mail asking your office to consider being a “Pilot SORH.” These pilots are critical piece in ensuring that these performance measures are manageable and clearly illustrate our impact.

PMC expects to complete the project by August 31; check future issues of the Branch for additional updates. Feel free to contact [Lynda Bergsma](#) or [Charles Owens](#) if you have any questions.

## Wingrove Named One of Ten Leading EMS Innovators

Gary Wingrove, recipient of the 2006 NOSORH Recognition Award, has been named one of the “Top 10 innovators in EMS who drove the profession forward in 2008” by the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*. Gary was recognized for his work developing an internationally standardized community paramedic curriculum that focuses on using paramedics in different roles, such as social service and public health. Additional information on Gary's award can be obtained by visiting the [Journal of Emergency Medical Services](#) Web site.

## Time to “Exchange” Your Approach

*“They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”— Andy Warhol*

Is there a SORH program you want to do better or differently? Is it time to try a different approach? Perhaps a NOSORH educational exchange could help you tackle the challenge. SORH staff may apply to the Educational Exchange Committee to support travel and per diem expenses associated with establishing a peer to peer learning/mentoring relationship.

One educational exchange participant planned to restructure her staff after another SORH director reviewed current staffing and recommended changes during a recent visit. Another recipient planned to develop an HIT grant program in their state based on the model she learned about in depth while visiting another SORH.

E-mail NOSORH Program Specialist [Betty King](#) to discover how a helpful peer or mentor can help you meet your learning or program development needs. Make the change today!