

## Mark your Calendar!



### June 3

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

### June 4

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

### June 9

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

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

### June 15

HIT Committee (noon EDT)

### June 16

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

### June 18

Annual Meeting Planning Committee (4:00 p.m. EDT)

### June 23

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

### June 25

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

### June 30—July 2

Region A Meeting (Lake Placid, NY)

### August 30

NOSORH Members Meeting @ ORHP Grantees Partnership Meeting (6:00 p.m. EDT, Washington DC)

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

May 2009



## NOSORH Policy Platform Draft Available for Review

The NOSORH Policy Committee has been working on a Policy Platform that outlines NOSORH's seven priority areas for the organization and provides a series of recommendations for addressing those areas. The committee plans on approving

the NOSORH Policy Platform at its June meeting and then presenting it to the NOSORH Board for approval and implementation.

A draft of the Policy Platform is available in the May 21, 2009 meeting materials in the [Policy](#)

[Committee Minutes and Reports](#) section of the NOSORH Web site. If you have any comments or suggestions on the Policy Platform, please share them with [Bill Hessert](#) by Friday, June 12.

## Special Meetings Being Held in Conjunction with Regional, Annual Meetings

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

- **July 7 (Region C; Lawrence, Kansas)** – “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. [Click here](#) for an agenda.
- **August 18 (Region E; Laramie, Wyoming)** – “Workforce Strategy Session for SORHs and Their Part-

ners.” 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. [Click here](#) for a draft agenda.

- **August 25-26 (National Rural EMS Summit; Park City, Utah)** – “SORH/EMS Learning Session.” For the third consecutive year, the Joint Committee on Emergency Care – a collaboration between 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 (NOSORH Annual Meeting; Austin, Texas)** – “Improving HIT for Rural America” One-day HIT workshop for SORHs and their partners. 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.

## We'll Miss You, Denis!



As excited as we are for this self-professed “old soldier for rural health,” we are saddened to share the news that **Denis Barton**, director of the Vermont Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORHPC) will be “packing his tent” in mid-June to become Vermont director of the Bi-State Primary Care Association.

Without a doubt, Denis' contributions to NOSORH and rural health have been enormous. Under his leadership in Vermont, for example, ORHPC implemented a

new migrant health and farm worker initiative; created Vermont's first agricultural safety program; conducted a statewide rural health needs assessment; and received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to help enhance community-based oral healthcare services in the state.

Good luck, Denis – we will miss you! Those wishing to send best wishes to Denis can do so at ([dbarton@bistatepca.org](mailto:dbarton@bistatepca.org)) after June 18.

## ORHP to Hold Grantees Partnership Meeting

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy has announced that its biennial Grantees Partnership Meeting (formerly All-Programs Meeting) will take place August 31–September 2 at the Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. The theme for this year's meeting will be “Building a New Foundation for Rural Health.”

As is usually the case, NOSORH plans to hold a membership meeting in conjunction with this year's meeting. That meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 30; stay tuned for a meeting location.

## Dues Reminder

Just a quick reminder that membership dues invoices, requests to update the membership directory and a member services survey will be arriving shortly. 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, a critical part of our mission – by helping improve the capacity of each SORH, NOSORH helps improve the health of all rural Americans. 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 concerns.

## Contact Information

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## Update on Performance Indicators Project

Work on developing performance indicators to measure the state and national impact of SORHs is progressing nicely. According to John Gale (Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine), 17 SORHs responded to the team's request for volunteers.

All 17 states will input data that enables the Performance Measures Committee to calculate the indicators; they also will be invited to participate in monthly project conference calls. A

subset of seven states will work more closely with John and with Matt Chandler (Performance Management Institute) to provide feedback on the indicators and the process.

Selecting seven pilot states from such an enthusiastic group was a difficult task, John says. Ultimately, the seven selected – Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas – were chosen based on organizational structure, geographic distribution and size in order to maximize diversity of the project.

The Performance Management Institute is currently conducting Webinars to train SORH participants on the indicators and data collection and entry tool. States that have completed training are already collecting and entering data. Later this summer, John and Matt will interview participants in order to assess process, tools and indicators; they will also produce a report for NOSORH that describes the project and identifies steps for implementing the indicators in all 50 SORHs.

### NOSORH Learning Exchanges Made Easy

Want to participate in a learning exchange but aren't sure where to begin?

NOSORH offers an interactive directory of SORH colleagues who are ready and willing to help you meet your programmatic learning objectives. Visit the [Mentoring Resources](#) section of the NOSORH Web site to find a listing of NOSORH mentors/peers by state or area of expertise. If you need assistance identifying a mentor/peer or SORH, contact NOSORH Program Specialist [Betty King](#) to discover how a helpful peer or mentor can help you meet your learning or program development needs.

Also, be sure to complete and submit a [Mentoring Application](#) for funding to support your experience. The Educational Exchange Committee co-chairs will review your application and respond quickly.

### Webinar Examines Impact of Economic Stimulus Funding, Health Reform

Interested in learning what implications economic stimulus funding and health reform will have on the rural healthcare workforce? Then plan to join the "National Healthcare Reform and the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act: Implications for the Health Workforce" Webinar slated for 3:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, July 7.

Among other things, the Webinar will help participants understand what workforce training programs are available as the result of recently passed economic stimulus legislation. It will also help SORHs identify the role they can play in using the economic stimulus funding and health reform to boost the rural healthcare workforce.

Visit the [NOSORH Related Events](#) section of the NOSORH Web site for call-in instructions and additional information.

### How to Use NOSORH Listservs

NOSORH has developed several member-related listservs for contacting with SORH colleagues. In addition to an all members list, NOSORH maintains director, SORH Grant, FLEX Grant and regional listservs. Links for the listservs are available in the [Members Resources](#) section of the NOSORH Web site.

Any posting from a list member will go directly to the list, but anything that is sent to the list by non-members will require approval before being posted to the list. This helps avoid inappropriate postings to the entire list.

Please be sure to use "reply all" judiciously and limit your listserv postings to NOSORH- and SORH-related actions or information sharing. We want to make sure we maintain the integrity of our lists and protect the privacy of members.

NOSORH Committee listservs are being prepared now. Stay tuned!

## A Good Time Was Had By All ...



John Eich (WI), Charles Owens (GA), Alison Hughes (AZ) and Gloria Wong (HI) were just a few of the familiar SORH faces at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual NRHA Rural Health Conference in Miami Beach May 5-8. Rumor has it that Rob Lowe and a few other celebrities were "in the house" as well, although we don't have any pictures to prove it! (Photo courtesy of Alison Hughes)

## Consortium Releases Food Safety Report and Recommendations

The Food Safety Research Consortium has released [Stronger Partnerships for Safer Food: An Agenda for Strengthening State and Local Roles in the Nation's Food Safety System](#), a report which details strengths and weaknesses of the current system in terms of illness surveillance, outbreak response, regulation and inspection and makes recommendations for building an effective, integrated national system.

Consortium members Michael R. Taylor, George Washington University professor and lead author on the report, and Adam Reichardt, director of environmental services for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, were both presenters at NOSORH's March "Partnering for Rural Food Safety" Webinar.