

# The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

November 2009

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



## Mark your Calendar!



### December 2

Workforce Committee  
(1:30 p.m. EST)

### December 3

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

### December 8

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

### December 15

HIT Committee (Noon EST)  
Policy Committee (2:00 pm  
EST)

### December 22

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

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

## Thanks, Ya'll!

Thanks to our speakers, attendees and everyone else for helping make the **2009 NOSORH Annual Meeting** and the **"Preparing for Tomorrow Today" HIT Pre-conference Summit** such an enormous success. The wealth of timely, pertinent information that was shared was outstanding, and the opportunity to "sound off" during the Town Hall meeting was so well received that we're already planning to make it part of next year's meeting. There were plenty of chances to get to know your NORH colleagues better as well – which was especially important considering we had 34 first-time attendees!

Thanks to Theresa Cruz and her staff from the Texas Department of Rural Affairs for being such tremendous hosts – Austin was charming and so was the hospitality! Thanks also to our gold sponsors – D.D. Bainbridge & Associates, Dixon Hughes, Opus Healthcare Solutions and PMI – our sponsor – Healthland – and all of our exhibitors whose financial support made the 2009 Annual Meeting possible.

Planning for the 2010 NOSORH Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma will begin soon. Please contact [Teryl Eisinger](#) if you want to be part of the

planning team; your help would be greatly appreciated!

Speaker presentations from this year's meeting and pre-conference summit are available in the [Past Event Materials](#) section of the NOSORH Web.



## Congratulations to NOSORH's 2009 Award Recipients

One of the highlights of every annual meeting is the luncheon honoring recipients of NOSORH's annual awards. This year was no different – award recipients honored during the 2009 Annual Meeting included:

- **Award of Merit** – Michigan Center for Rural Health
- **Recognition Award** – Dr. Amy Brock Martin (South Carolina Rural Research Center)

- **Distinguished Service Award** – Charles Owens (Georgia State Office of Rural Health)

- **James D. Bernstein Mentoring Award** – Patricia Carr (Alaska Office of Rural Health)

Congratulations to all of these deserving award winners!

## NOSORH Honors First Leadership Institute Graduates

Attendees at this year's Annual Meeting also had the opportunity to honor graduates from the inaugural class of NOSORH's Leadership Institute:

- **Sharla Allen** (Wyoming Office of Rural Health)
- **Angie Emge** (Michigan Center for Rural Health)
- **Cari Fouts** (Colorado Rural Health Center)
- **John Hanson** (Washington State Office of Rural Health Program)
- **Joyce Hospodar** (Arizona State Office of Rural Health Program)
- **Katie Jerkins** (Iowa Bureau of Healthcare Access)
- **Kristi Mitchell** (Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health)
- **Jill Myers** (Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care)
- **Pamela Smith** (Massachusetts State Office of Rural Health)

NOSORH launched the Leadership Institute earlier this year in an effort to

enhance the leadership and management skills of emerging employees of State Offices of Rural Health. Class members participated in seven Webinars, attended a capstone workshop held in conjunction with the NOSORH Annual Meeting and completed a rural health project utilizing the leadership skills they developed throughout the Institute.

Each participant also benefitted from the mentoring they received from an established national rural health leader throughout the program. A special thank you to those who served as mentors this year: Graham Adams (South Carolina), Alisa Butler-Druzba (New Hampshire), Lynette Dickson (North Dakota), Caroline Ford (Nevada), John Eich (Wisconsin), Charles Owens (Georgia), Mary Sheridan (Idaho), Chris Tilden (Kansas) and Lou Ann Wilroy (Colorado).

Our heartfelt thanks also to Dr. Vicki Luther and Milan Wall of The

Heartland Center for Leadership Development, who helped NOSORH launch the Leadership Institute, developed the curriculum and served as instructors throughout the year.



Congratulations to our first graduates of the NOSORH Leadership Institute! Pictured first row (L to R): Milan Wall (Heartland Center), Jill Myers (Minnesota), Cari Fouts (Colorado), John Hanson (Washington), Joyce Hospodar (Arizona); second row (L to R): Dr. Vicki Luther (Heartland Center), Angie Emge (Michigan), Kristi Mitchell (Alabama), Sharla Allen (Wyoming), Pamela Smith (Massachusetts). Not pictured: Katie Jerkins (Iowa).

## Stay Tuned...

Sometime in December, NOSORH will ask SORH directors to complete a brief survey that will allow NOSORH to develop one-page profiles of each State Office of Rural Health. NOSORH will then assemble a reference/directory of all SORH profiles for use by NOSORH and SORHs and also use them to educate constituents, potential partners and state/federal legislators about the work being done by SORHs on behalf of rural citizens

Additional information will also be shared in December regarding the Grant Writing Certification program currently being developed by NOSORH.

## Tweet! Tweet!



NOSORH is now on Twitter! Sign up to follow us at <http://twitter.com/NOSORH>; we'll be happy to send you NOSORH updates and other pertinent rural health-related information.

Stay tuned – NOSORH will soon be on Facebook and LinkedIn as well!

## Quotes of the Month

"I found the sessions at the Annual Meeting really meaningful and the networking was great. We'll be back." – **Jeff Firth**, Healthland (2009 Annual Meeting Sponsor)

"I'm not here to tell you what's good about health care; I'm not here to tell you what's bad about health care. I'm here to tell you that (NOSORH) is a great organization." – **Lance Keilers**, Administrator, Ballinger (Texas) Memorial Hospital

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## Travel Scholarships Available for Educational Exchange Opportunities

Is there a new program you want to try or an existing program you want to improve? Is there another SORH that has a similar program that could serve as a model for yours? Want to see firsthand how that program could benefit your SORH? Perhaps a NOSORH educational exchange could help.

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 Education Coordinator [Stephanie Hansen](#) to discover how a peer or mentor can help you meet your learning or program development needs. Make the change today!

## NOSORH Web Site: Your Source for Meeting Info, Reports, Other Resources

Looking for presentations from the 2009 Annual Meeting or HIT Pre-conference Summit? Want to learn more about last year's "Partnership Champions" projects or other previous NOSORH-funded initiatives? Interested in reviewing the NOSORH

Policy Platform or taking advantage of NOSORH educational exchange resources? All of these resources and so much more are just a click away at [www.nosorh.org](http://www.nosorh.org).

NOSORH recently redesigned its Web site to make it more attractive and easier to navigate. Feel free to contact [Bill Hessert](#) if you need help finding something or have suggestions for making the site even more user-friendly!

## Comings and Goings

**Megan Alavi** is now serving as the Region C Liaison for the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and project officer for Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska. Originally from Willmar, Minnesota, Megan has spent the majority of her life in the Midwest. She received her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Minnesota and spent two years working for the Minneapolis VA Medical Center before joining the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration about a year ago. Megan can be reached at 301.443.8349 or [malavi@hrsa.gov](mailto:malavi@hrsa.gov).

**Madhumita Chatterjee, Ph.D.**, has been appointed rural health manager within the Rural Health and Primary Care Section of the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services. Madhu has been with the Division since completing her postdoctoral research at The Ohio State University in 2003. Since then, she has been actively involved in New Hampshire's lead poisoning prevention,

biomonitoring and food emergency response efforts. Madhu can be reached at 603.271.4557 or [mchatterjee@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:mchatterjee@dhhs.state.nh.us).

It is with mixed emotions that we announce **Chris Tilden**, a long-time friend and current board member of NOSORH, will step down as director of the Kansas Office of Local and Rural Health in June 2010 to become executive director of the Mountain States Group. Located in Boise, Idaho, Mountain States Group is a nonprofit organization offering a rich, diverse portfolio maternal/child health, aging, mental health, refugee services and rural health programs.

Chris' impact on SORHs and rural health have been far-reaching since he joined the Kansas State Department of Health in 2001. He was instrumental in developing the state's quality and performance improvement program for Critical Access Hospitals that is recognized nationally for its innovative approach and is now being replicated

in many other states. He has also been a strong voice on behalf of rural emergency medical services and played a key role in the creation of the Joint Committee for Rural Emergency Care – a collaborative effort between NOSORH and the National Organization of State EMS Officials.

As Chris said in an email to NOSORH members, his resignation is not a goodbye. "I remain committed to the ideals of improving access to health and human services for underserved populations, and I am confident the future will hold many opportunities for us to work together," he said.

Congratulations and good luck, Chris!

*If you have had any new employees join your office recently, please contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) so the Educational Exchange Committee can welcome them and let them know about the NOSORH educational exchange opportunities that are available to them. Also, please be sure to contact [Bill Hessert](#) about any staffing changes within your SORH so we can share the news with your NOSORH colleagues!*

## NOSORH Officers Selected for 2010

Congratulations to Caroline Ford, assistant dean at the University of Nevada School of Medicine and director of the Nevada State Office of Rural Health, who was elected by NOSORH members to serve as president-elect of the organization in 2010. Congratulations also to Kenny Doppenberg, special projects coordinator for the South Dakota Office of Rural Health, for being elected to a second one-year term as secretary.

NOSORH's slate of officers for the upcoming year includes:

- **President** – Mark Schoenbaum (Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care)
- **President-Elect** – Caroline Ford (Nevada Office of Rural Health)
- **Past President** – Lynette Dickson (North Dakota Center for Rural Health)
- **Secretary** – Kenny Doppenberg (South Dakota Office of Rural Health)
- **Treasurer** – Theresa Cruz (Texas Department of Rural Affairs)

Thanks to these outstanding leaders for your willingness to serve NOSORH in this capacity in 2010!

