

Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

October 2011

Website: www.nosorh.org Wikispaces: nosorh.wikispaces.com



October 4-5

New SORH Staff Meeting
(Rockville, Maryland)

October 6

Webinar – [Rural Health Outreach Grants: Some Tips for SORH Technical Assistance](#) (2:00 p.m. EDT)

October 13

P4P Special Projects Coordinator application/resume deadline

October 17

Webinar - Proposed Rules and Requirements for Qualified Health Plans (3:00 p.m. EDT)

October 18

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

October 25

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

October 26

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

October 27

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

October 31

RHC Learning Community Call (2:00 p.m. EDT)

November 1

RHC TA Team (2:00 p.m. EDT)

November 3

Policy Program Monitoring Team (3:00 p.m. EDT)

November 17

[National Rural Health Day](#)

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

Appropriations/Policy Update

Both the House and Senate Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations subcommittees have released their versions of the FY 2012 Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations bill. Both Committees are recommending that the State Office of Rural Health program receive an appropriation of \$10.055 million for FY 2012. The language waiving the SORH cap was also included in both proposed bills. Finally, Flex program funding currently remains intact, with both Committees recommending \$41 million for FY 2012. Some of that money may be earmarked for specific projects and initiatives, although the amount "earmarked" looks to be less than \$2 million.

As NOSORH Legislative Liaison Bill Finerfrock indicated at the NOSORH Annual Meeting, legislative activity will

be very condensed and hectic between now and November. **Everything** is on the table. For example, even though the Committees have approved keeping Flex funding at \$41 million for FY 2012, long-term plans call for cutting \$6 billion in funding over the next 10 years. Those cuts would be achieved by reducing Medicare cost-based reimbursement for Critical Access Hospitals from 101% to 100%; reducing the amount of bad debt payments for cost-based reimbursements from 70% to 25% for certain hospitals over a three-year period; and rescinding Critical Access Hospital designation for any CAH located within 10 miles of another hospital.

That is why it is imperative now more than ever to reach out to legislators and stress the importance of funding these critical rural health programs. To assist

you in these efforts, Bill Finerfrock has created a **legislative action plan** (with tips on educating officials about these programs) and a **template of a letter** to send to Congressional leaders. Those documents are available in the [Policy/Other Documents](#) section of the NOSORH website.

The NOSORH Policy Committee is also preparing a survey that it will be sending to those states with Critical Access Hospitals to assess the impact of the proposed long-term cuts.

Feel free to contact NOSORH Legislative Liaison [Bill Finerfrock](#) or NOSORH Policy Committee Co-chairs [Mark Schoenbaum](#) (Minnesota) or [Lisa Davis](#) (Pennsylvania) if you have any questions or suggestions to share with the Policy Committee.

NOSORH Announces 2011 Award Recipients

One of the highlights of each Annual Meeting is the annual presentation of our annual NOSORH Awards. This year was no different as NOSORH honored the following outstanding individuals and organizations in Denver on September 8:

- **Award of Merit** – Arkansas Office of Rural Health and Primary Care
- **Emerging Leader Award** – Natalie Claiborne (Montana Office of Rural Health)
- **Recognition Award** – Tammy Norville (North Carolina Office of Rural Health and Community Care)
- **Distinguished Service Award** – Mark Schoenbaum

(Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care)

- **Distinguished Andrew W. Nichols Award** – Caroline Ford (formerly with the Nevada Office of Rural Health)
- **James D. Bernstein Mentoring Award** – Alison Hughes (formerly with the Arizona Office of Rural Health)

Congratulations to all of these deserving award recipients! Be sure to check out profiles and photos in the [NOSORH News](#) section of the home page. Also be sure to visit NOSORH's [Facebook page](#) to view photos of our 2011 award winners and their presenters.

Mentors Wanted

NOSORH is looking for volunteers who would be willing to serve as mentors to newer SORH staff members. Please contact NOSORH Education Coordinator [Stephanie Hansen](#) if you are willing and able to help!

Rural Health Clinic Learning Community Conference Call

- Who:** State Offices of Rural Health (SORHs) and their invited guests
- What:** The latest bimonthly conference call to discuss rural health clinic (RHC) issues
This month: Including RHCs in Your Grant Applications
- When:** **Monday, October 31, 2011**
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT
- How:** Phone: (877) 669-3239; Passcode: 667 195 698
- Questions?** Contact Stephanie Hansen at steph@nosorh.org or (208) 375-0407.



Webinar Provides Info on Rural Health Outreach Grants

- Want to learn more about the Rural Health Care Services Outreach Grant Program?
- Interested in hearing examples of evidence-based promising practices?
- Looking for tools/resources to offer application assistance in your state?

Then NOSORH's next educational Webinar, **Rural Health Outreach Grant: Some Tips for SORH Technical Assistance** (Thursday, October 6; 2:00 p.m. EDT) is just the thing for you!

Pre-registration is required; to learn more, please visit the [Upcoming Events](#) section of the NOSORH website. For those who cannot attend, the Webinar will be recorded and posted in the [Past Webinar Materials](#) section of the NOSORH website upon its completion.

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National Rural Health Day Is Just around the Corner!



The excitement is building – National Rural Health Day will be here before you know it!

We are enjoying reading the community success stories you've been sharing and hearing about your plans for celebrating National Rural Health Day on November 17. If you haven't done so already, stop by the [National Rural Health Day website](#) to read these stories "Celebrating the Power of Rural!" We

want to post more of these stories, too – as a matter of fact, we'd love to have at least one from each state – so if you haven't done so already, please submit your success stories so we can share them with others!

You can also visit the [National Rural Health Day website](#) to access the latest available resources and information -- including template proclamations and releases; order forms for magnets, buttons, t-shirts and scrubs; and suggested daily Twitter/Facebook postings (courtesy of the North Dakota Center for Rural Health.) Also please be

sure to fill out your state's portion of the [Google Docs spreadsheet](#) to keep us abreast of your celebration plans!

Does your SORH present any annual state rural health awards? If so, we would appreciate if you could share a list of your most recent award winners with us so we can introduce these rural health leaders to everyone. Feel free to send your lists and any corresponding photos to NOSORH Communications Coordinator [Bill Hessert](#). We're still looking for names of famous people from rural communities from your state, too!

Annual Meeting Recap: Still Feeling That "Rocky Mountain High!"

It was great to see everyone in Denver at the **2011 NOSORH Annual Meeting/EMS Learning Session!** The wealth of information shared was outstanding, and there were plenty of opportunities for the more than 140 attendees to get to become better acquainted with each other as well.

Thanks to Cari Fouts and the Colorado Rural Health Center for being such tremendous hosts – and thanks to the speakers, sponsors and exhibitors who made the Annual Meeting such a success! Speaker presentations from the Annual Meeting and EMS Learning Session are now available in the [Past Event Materials](#) section of the NOSORH website.

Congratulations also to our recently elected (or in Alisa's case, re-elected) NOSORH officers: President **John Barnas** (Michigan), President-elect **Scott Ekblad** (Oregon), Past President **Karen Madden** (New York), Secretary **Alisa Druzba** (New Hampshire) and Treasurer **Charles Owens** (Georgia).



This year's NOSORH Annual Meeting and EMS Learning Session literally left some people jumping for joy! Thanks as always to **Keith Clark** (Nevada) for capturing the spirit of the State Offices of Rural Health so artfully!

NOSORH Ramping Up Efforts to Support SORHs' P4P Efforts

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services recently launched [Partnership for Patients: Better Care, Lower Costs](#), a public-private partnership that seeks to improve the quality, safety and affordability of health care for all Americans.

Those interested in learning more about P4P should plan to attend the **National Priorities Partnership (NPP) Patient Webinar Series**. Although the last Webinar in the series is scheduled to take place October 5 at 1:00 p.m. EDT, recordings of all of the Webinars are available online. [Click here](#) to

register for the upcoming Webinar or to download any of the previous ones.

NOSORH will soon begin working with SORHs to enhance P4P activities within their states. Over the next several months, NOSORH will:

- Identify opportunities and develop resources that allow SORHs to provide P4P leadership and technical assistance services;
- Launch a P4P learning community to ensure ongoing sharing and mentoring among interested SORHs; and

- Update SORHs and their key partners on P4P-related issues via Webinar and at NOSORH meetings throughout the year.

NOSORH will be hiring a special projects coordinator to guide its P4P efforts. If you or any colleagues may know of anyone interested in this position, please download the position description from the NOSORH homepage and encourage them to apply before October 13.

Stay tuned for additional updates on how NOSORH can assist your State Office with its P4P activities!

Thank You Kathy ... and Thanks and Good Luck, Charles

NOSORH expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to [Kathy Collison](#), director of the **Delaware Office of Primary Care and Rural Health**, for agreeing to serve as a Region A Representative on the NOSORH Board of Directors effective immediately. NOSORH and your SORH colleagues appreciate your willingness to serve in this capacity!

At the same time, however, NOSORH again finds itself saying good-bye and good luck to one of its own. This time we bid adieu to [Charles Dwyer](#), director of the **Maine Office of Rural Health and Primary Care**, who will be leaving his current position to become Mid-Coast District public

health liaison for the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention effective October 31.

"I feel truly blessed to have worked with some of the most dedicated people I have ever known, and I look forward to working with many of you again in my new position," Charles says. "I remain committed to serving rural and underserved communities and look forward to bringing that focus with me in this new capacity."

Thank you, Charles, and good luck in your new role – you'll be missed!