

Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

November 2011

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



November 3

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

November 6

Daylight Saving Time Ends

November 7

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

November 15

Webinar – [Introduction to Federal Workforce Programs That Affect Rural America](#)
(2:00 p.m. EST)

November 16

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

November 17

[National Rural Health Day](#)

November 22

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

November 24

Happy Thanksgiving!!!!

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

Time to Call Out Rural Hospitals, Communities

Washington seems to be in a holding pattern as everyone anxiously awaits the recommendations set to be released by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction – aka, the “super committee.” The “super committee” is exploring all options – **EVERYTHING** is on the table – which is why it is imperative that you contact your legislators and stress the importance of funding rural health programs. It is also crucial that SORHs contact their rural hospitals and ask them to contact their legislators – and encourage hospitals to reach out to their communities and ask them to do the same.

NOSORH has a variety of resources available in the [Policy/Other](#)

[Documents](#) section of the NOSORH website to assist you in these efforts, including:

- A legislative action plan with tips on educating officials about these programs and a template of a letter to send to Congressional leaders;
- A template of a letter that rural Michigan hospital CEOs signed and sent to their representatives and senators, along with a form they used to ask rural hospital board members to show their support for rural programs; and
- A guest editorial written by Tim Size, executive director of the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative.

NOSORH recently asked Critical Access Hospitals to complete a

survey assessing the potential impact of proposed cuts in Medicare funding to those hospitals. Of the 45 percent of Critical Access Hospitals that responded, 56 percent felt that reducing reimbursements to 100 percent was the largest threat; another 32 percent felt reducing bad debt payments would have the most drastic impact.

[Click here](#) to review the results of the entire survey; please contact [Donna Pfaendtner](#) if you would like a summary report of your state data or a copy of the master spreadsheet.

Last but certainly not least, **please** let us know what, if anything, you are hearing back from Congress.



U.S. Senator Al Franken (left; D-Minnesota) received his NOSORH 2011 Legislator of the Year Award from NOSORH Past President Mark Schoenbaum during a visit to Glacial Ridge Hospital (Glenwood, Minnesota) on October 9. Congratulations and thanks for all you do to support rural health, Senator Franken!



National Rural Health Day: Let the Celebration Begin!



November is *finally* here, which means National Rural Health Day is just a few days away! It has been so exciting hearing what everyone has planned for November 17 – by the sounds of things, there will be *something* going on in nearly every state!

We will continue sending weekly updates to let you know about any additional resources and information available on the [National Rural Health Day website](#). The latest addition is the [National Rural Health Day Presentation Template](#) in the [Tools](#) section, which provides talking points for any National Rural Health Day speech you may have to make and can serve as your PowerPoint presentation as well!

NOSORH is also planning to host a series of mini-webinars/press conferences the afternoon of

November 17. Topics to be addressed that day include “Rural Health 101,” “Quality Care in Rural America” and “Caring for Veterans across the Country.” Please plan to join us for any/all of these webinars on National Rural Health Day, and feel free to invite your local media contacts to join us as well. If you’d like to share the work being done by your SORH in any of these areas as part of the webinars, please contact [Stephanie Hansen](#).

Please be sure to send any photos or videos of your celebration to [Bill Hesser](#) so we can share them with everyone on the website! Also feel free to contact Bill with any additional National Rural Health Day questions.

Get ready to “Celebrate the Power of Rural!”

Thank You, Cathleen!



NOSORH wishes to thank [Cathleen McElligott](#), director of the **Massachusetts State Office of Rural Health**, for agreeing to serve as a Region A Representative on the NOSORH Board of Directors effective November 1. NOSORH and your SORH colleagues are truly grateful for your willingness to serve in this capacity!

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NOSORH Ramping Up SORHs' Partnership for Patients Support

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. We are delighted that Partnership for Patient leaders will be among those participating in NOSORH's National Rural Health Day Webinars/press conferences the afternoon of November 17.

To date, more than 6,200 partners – hospitals, healthcare providers, consumer/community patient groups,

employers and other organizations – have pledged their commitment to Partnership for Patients. We know many SORHs have encouraged Critical Access Hospitals and other providers to sign on – some SORHs have signed on as well! If you haven't done so already, please consider making your pledge to [Join the Partnership](#) today!

- Over the next few months, NOSORH will begin working with SORHs on enhancing Partnership for Patient activities within their states. Those activities will include: Identifying opportunities and developing

resources that allow SORHs to provide leadership and technical assistance services on Partnership for Patient activities;

- Launching a Partnership for Patients learning community to ensure ongoing sharing and mentoring among interested SORHs; and
- Providing regular updates to SORHs and their key partners on Partnership for Patients issues and activities.

Stay tuned for more information in the weeks to come!

Webinar Provides Info on Federal Workforce Funding

Interested in learning more about federal workforce funding opportunities available to SORHs and rural health providers – including those outside the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services? Then plan on joining us for NOSORH's next educational Webinar,

[Introduction to Federal Workforce Programs That Affect Rural America](#), on November 15 at 2:00 p.m. EST. Dr. Daniel Mareck of the Bureau of Health Professions will review the [Rural Guide to Federal Health Professions Funding](#) and provide additional information in order to help you become more familiar with, and take advantage of,

these opportunities!

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.

Congratulations to the Leadership Institute "Class of 2011!"



Congratulations to the most recent graduates of the NOSORH Leadership Institute:

- Shawn Balleydier (West Virginia Division of Rural Health & Recruitment);
- Keith Clark (Nevada Office of Rural Health);
- Ann Ferrero (Office of Rural Health Policy – Community Based Division);
- Vanessa Hooker (Office of Rural Health Policy – Community Based Division);
- Leticia Manning (Office of Rural Health Policy – Community Based Division);
- Michelle Mills (Colorado Rural Health Center);

- Ronnie Rom (Massachusetts Office of Rural Health);
- Tina Turner (Ohio State Office of Rural Health); and
- Christina Villalobos (Office of Rural Health Policy – Community Based Division)

NOSORH created the Leadership Institute to enhance the leadership skills of SORHs. As part of their course requirement, participants are expected to complete a capstone project under the tutelage of an experienced rural health leader. This year's projects – available for downloading in the [WikiSpaces](#) section (and soon to be included in the [Other Resources/Publications](#) section) of the NOSORH website – capture the essence of the comprehensive work done by SORHs.

"It has been a real pleasure working on this round of the Leadership Institute," notes Milan Wall, co-director of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development and one of the facilitators for the Leadership Institute. "I was super-impressed with the capstone project reports, and we got some good evidence about how people benefitted from their mentorships."

The next offering of the Leadership Institute will be expanded to include other emerging or established rural leaders. Are you interested in participating? Are there particular management skills and/or areas of leadership development on which you would like to focus? Please feel free to share your thoughts and ideas with NOSORH Education Coordinator [Stephanie Hansen](#).

"Straight from the SORHs": News from the State Offices and ORHP

[Alan J. Spidel](#) has been appointed chief executive officer of the **Colorado Rural Health Center**. Alan brings remarkable experience in finance, operations, and strategic planning to the Center. For the past eight years, he was a regional vice president for an investment banking firm that specialized in healthcare finance, including critical access hospitals. He has also served in leadership roles at CIGNA,

Colorado Access, Denver Health, and University of Colorado Hospital and was previously the controller for the Medically Indigent and Child Health Plans.

[Marie Ballew](#) has been appointed rural health coordinator for the **Missouri Office of Primary Care and Rural Health**. Barb Brendel will now serve as rural hospital Flex coordinator and focus on Flex and SHIP activities.

Please contact [Bill Hessert](#) with any staffing changes, awards or other news about you or your SORH to share with your NOSORH colleagues! Also, please let [Stephanie Hansen](#) know when any new employees join your staff so the Educational Exchange Committee can welcome them and share information about NOSORH's various educational exchange opportunities.