

# Mark your Calendar!



# The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

March, 2013

Website: [www.nosorh.org](http://www.nosorh.org) Wikispaces: [nosorh.wikispaces.com](http://nosorh.wikispaces.com)



## March 5

- Learning Community – SORH grant applications (3 pm EDT)

## March 13

- Webinar – SORH Partnerships: Who, How and Why (3 pm EDT)

## March 14

- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (EMS) Committee (10 am EDT)

## March 19

- Policy Committee (2 pm EDT)
- Learning Community – Rural Health Workforce (3 pm EDT)

## March 26

- Communications Committee (1 pm EDT)
- Education Exchange Committee (1 pm EDT)

## March 27

- Webinar – Augmenting PPACA with State Policy: State Health Care Reform Decisions that Improve Rural Access (3 pm EDT)

## March 28

- Flex Committee (3 pm EDT)

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

## NOSORH Policy Update

As we go to press, a sequester is looming. According to Bill Finerfrock, NOSORH's Legislative Liaison, "The President does not want it to happen, but there's been no credible alternative made yet. We should plan on it." If the sequester does happen, we will keep NOSORH members up-to-date with Breaking News emails containing as much information as we can gather on how the sequester could affect appropriations for SORHs, etc.

In the meantime, NOSORH "will keep pushing for reauthorization, continuing resolution and the technical issues we need," said Executive Director Teryl Eisinger. Eisinger said that she and Finerfrock, along with three states, made headway with support for reauthorization and appropriation of the SORH program during the February Policy Institute.

SORH staff should be aware of a

February 7<sup>th</sup> Federal Register Notice ([78 FR 9216](#)), which has rural implications. One proposal is to change the requirement that a physician be on-site for RHCs, CAHs and FQHCs; another is to drop the requirement that CAHs develop patient care policies with the advice of at least one non-staff member. This is a rare opportunity to comment on a CMS proposal. Comments are due April 8<sup>th</sup> at 5pm EST.

## New SORH Contracts Awarded

Last fall, NOSORH called for proposals from State Offices of Rural Health for projects to build the capacity of SORHs, facilitate partnerships, and promote leadership to improve health. Fourteen SORHs championed great proposals. Unfortunately funding was only available for three awards. Awards were made this month to Washington, Pennsylvania and Alabama/Georgia.

Kris Sparks at the Washington SORH described their contract award for addressing the rural health workforce with veterans as "win-win" because

it addresses "the need for health professionals in rural areas and employing veterans who were health professionals in the service." Lisa Davis, director of the PA SORH, said that their award for a state partnership for Medicaid managed care expansion outreach "will provide a much-needed service to eligible rural Pennsylvanians and be a great education for our office." Charles Owens at the GA SORH said that the award to Georgia and Alabama for collaborative efforts to support certified Rural Health Clinics is especially important since "neither Georgia nor Alabama has a Rural

Health Clinic association; therefore this Partnership is the only coordinated effort to bring all RHCs statewide together to ensure that all have access to critical training and education."

"We've been so impressed with the projects, we're going to look for foundation support to grow the funding for this type of work," said NOSORH Executive Director Teryl Eisinger. "These are small projects that will be great to watch and learn from. Thanks to all SORHs who participated in this effort!"

## NOSORH Position Announcement and Staff News

**NOSORH is looking for a full-time Special Projects Coordinator.** The person in this position will coordinate and plan meetings, educational resources and special projects to build the capacity of the nation's 50 State Offices of Rural Health, to coordinate, educate and provide technical assistance. This is a full-time employed, telecommuter position with flexible work hours. A dedicated home office and ability to telecommute and travel to approximately seven meetings per year is required. Bachelor's degree

in a related field is preferred. To apply, submit a cover letter, resume and list of three references to Donna Pfaendtner, Administrator, by email to [donnap@nosorh.org](mailto:donnap@nosorh.org) no later than March 5, 2013, 5 PM eastern. For more information, click [here](#) or contact Donna at email above. Please pass this along to anyone who might be interested!

**We're also proud to announce the advancement of NOSORH staff.** Last spring, the NOSORH Executive

Committee requested that a review of all staff positions and the organizational structure be conducted. After working closely with the Executive Committee and reviewing the needs of the organization, Teryl Eisinger's position was reviewed and revised to Executive Director, Stephanie Hansen has been promoted to Education and Services Director, Donna Pfaendtner will take on more responsibilities as NOSORH Administrator and Paige Law, Information Assistant, has been hired full-time.

## Carolina Dreaming on a Winter's Day 2013 NOSORH Annual Meeting in Asheville, N.C.



Did you know that in the fall, the leaves in the mountains begin their color change on the highest peaks and gradually work down to the lowest elevations? The autumn leaves should be at (or just past) their peak in downtown Asheville, N.C., during the NOSORH Annual Meeting (AM), October 28-30, 2013. Plan to join us to discuss "peak" rural health topics, be inspired by the promising practices of your peers, and join in our popular small group discussion sessions. Mark your calendars, you won't want to miss this meeting! Want to help make the annual meeting a success? A Planning Committee has been formed, but welcomes additional help. Contact Stephanie Hansen, [steph@nosorh.org](mailto:steph@nosorh.org), if you'd like to volunteer. The first committee call will be sometime in March.

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## NOSORH Funded by Veterans Health Administration

NOSORH was recently awarded a small contract with the Veterans Health Administration to assess and build collaboration among SORHs and the Veterans Health Administration. NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger and Stephanie Hansen, NOSORH Education and Services Director, met with VHA Office of Rural Health staff to finalize the contract. Plans for the contract include an assessment of SORH activities and VHA rural resources and capacity building activities to increase collaboration. "The staff at the VHA have been so tenacious and helpful in getting this contract, it's a real pleasure to work with Dr. Byron Bair and Nancy Maher," Eisinger said. "We look forward to watching this collaborative work grow."

## Washington and North Dakota SORHs Swap Info on Recruitment, TruServe in Recent Educational Exchange



Mark Barclay  
ND SORH



John Hanson  
WA SORH



Natalie Gonzalez  
WA SORH

An Educational Exchange (EE) between the Washington and North Dakota State Offices of Rural Health (SORHs) in January began with a conversation over dinner.

"Kris (Sparks) and I were having dinner with a few others at the NOSORH annual meeting, and we started talking about my new position in recruitment and how Natalie Gonzalez from their office would be a great resource," said Mark Barclay, Workforce Specialist and TruServe Coordinator at the North Dakota Center for Rural Health (ND SORH). Barclay especially wanted to meet with Gonzalez since she is set to retire from the WA SORH this spring. "Natalie is also the 3RNet member in Washington, and I am the North Dakota member. 3RNet is such a valuable resource to SORHs and Natalie, through her experience with the association, was able to make 3RNet even more useful for me."

Pulling the EE together was an "absolutely easy process," Barclay said. By the Wednesday after the conference, the application was already submitted and, shortly after, approved.

On their side, the WA SORH was looking for TruServe training. TruServe is a web-based tracking system offered through a partnership between NOSORH and ND SORH. The system allows SORHs and other non-profits to track the measures that show their impact. The information can be used for annual reports, legislative requests, program evaluation, etc. The system

produces tailored reports, charts, and maps through an easy to use interface, designed specifically with SORHs in mind.

"The training went along smoothly," said John Hanson, a Rural Health Specialist at the WA SORH. "Mark took us through all the areas and pieces of TruServe and allowed us to ask questions as he went." The ability to ask questions during the presentation was one of the greatest values of the exchange, Hanson said, noting that the EE made their face-to-face meeting possible. Now, because of Barclay's visit, his Office is better equipped to use TruServe.

"We have had it for a year, but we needed to teach the others in the Office how to use it," Hanson said. "So having Mark here was very helpful." Before Barclay's visit, Hanson said, he thought that TruServe might be something his Office would use once a year to gather data for their annual PIMS report. Now, because of Barclay's visit, he says he realizes that the TruServe program is capable of keeping all kinds of data, and that everyone in the WA SORH probably will have some use for it. "As we talked about TruServe, I realized we have a program that we can enter stuff into right away, which would be easier for us to keep track of things."

"Having access to TruServe allows even the smallest SORHs to be able to justify their work, and be able to produce charts and maps showing their impact, easily and without a graphic designer," Barclay said. "By partnering with

NOSORH, SORHs are much more easily able to access TruServe. NOSORH has truly been great to work with, and made the enrollment/payment process easy. By NOSORH taking on a lot of the administration, it has kept the cost of TruServe low." He added, "I've done in-office TruServe training for other offices, but this was the first one we've done thru an EE."

Barclay came away from the EE with more information on recruitment and retention (R&R). "Mark has already made amazing roads into R&R and is deeply involved with Community APGAR, a program developed by a physician from Idaho, which helps communities to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses regarding R&R," Gonzalez said.

"Natalie was great to work with," Barclay said. "She has so much practical experience that she was able to share with me. This information will be implemented to enhance North Dakota's workforce efforts."

The [Educational Exchange Program](#) supports leadership and partnership efforts of SORHs by offering and/or facilitating mentoring, education, information exchanges and training assistance. The program paid for Barclay's travel and lodging expenses.

"I would absolutely say that the EE is a worthwhile program," Hanson concluded.

## 2013 SORH/NOSORH Meetings Confirmed

- Apr 30 - May 1 (Region D) - San Diego
- Jun 18 – 20 (Region A) - Providence
- Aug 6 - 8 (Region B) - Lexington
- Aug 20 – 21 (Region C) - Omaha

These are the regional meetings that have been confirmed so far. For more information on these meetings (and other regional meetings, as they are confirmed), visit the NOSORH [Upcoming Events Materials](#) page.

## Get Your March Steal Sheet!

Get your March Steal Sheet—items from this month's Branch that you can "steal" for use in your newsletters, emails, etc. It's all in a downloadable Word file that you can cut and paste as needed. To get your Steal Sheet, go to the NOSORH Steal Sheets section of the [Toolkits](#) page.

## Respond to Survey on SORH ACA Activities

The NOSORH Policy Program Team is helping us to focus our work on the needs and capacities of SORH work related to health care system changes and opportunities from the Affordable Care Act (ACA). We know that many SORHs are taking on a wide variety of activities disseminating information, providing technical assistance and coordinating efforts in their state (see Promising Practices article for one example!). We want to hear about this good work and share it with other SORHs. We need to hear from SORHs about these roles, their challenges and their need for resources especially since it is important that we are able to partner with ORHP in these efforts.

Please respond to the survey by 3/7 - [click here](#).

## "Promising Practices"

Beginning this month, the Branch will feature the good work and "Promising Practices" of at least one SORH. NOSORH plans to showcase efforts that highlight the work of SORHs on marketing and communications, networking, policy development, staff leadership initiatives and planning. We're interested in the innovative, effective and valuable work that SORHs are doing across the county. Stories and information on these efforts will also be uploaded to the website (in the Promising Practices section). Contact Beth Blevins, Branch editor, at [bethb@nosorh.org](mailto:bethb@nosorh.org) to set up a short email or phone interview in which you can tell your story.

## Online Brochure Provides Information on the Affordable Care Act



An online brochure, created by the Southwest Rural Policy Network (SWRPN) and distributed by the Arizona State Office of Rural Health, aims to provide quick and easy information on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for a rural audience there.

The brochure was a response to a W.K. Kellogg Foundation initiative called Rural People, Rural Policy and was developed by the SWRPN's Health Action Team, according to Joyce Hospodar, AZ SORH Health Systems Development Manager and SWRPN Action Team Chair. Using money from that initiative, the AZ SORH was able to

make printed copies to distribute in the state, which so far it has distributed to many organizations including AHECs, FQHCs and hospitals. "All the other material we are seeing on the ACA is so complicated," Hospodar said. "We're trying to get the information more understandable to people living in rural communities. As people become more aware of the ACA, we'll be able to increase their participation in what they're eligible for, so more people will be getting insurance and be involved with the benefits of the ACA."

Feedback on the brochure has been positive, Hospodar said. "The momentum is increasing, more people are wanting it. It has been lauded for ease of use." By popular demand the brochure is being translated into Spanish, and public service announcements are being written from it in both English and Spanish, which will be targeted for national distribution.

Funding for development of the brochure came from the Kellogg

Initiative. Despite the up-front costs of web development and printing, Hospodar said, she thinks it will be a good investment. "So many organizations are working to get the word out about the ACA that there's lots of duplication. We're trying to streamline it. The brochure can be used to answer questions that patients—and citizens—have about the ACA quickly and easily."

Hospodar said that both the online and print brochure versions can be modified and used by other State Offices of Rural Health (SORHs), but it will require some funding for the modifications. The New Mexico members of the Health Action Team have tailored the brochure for their state and have made it available online. To access the Arizona and New Mexico ACA brochures, visit the SWRPN [Affordable Care Act](#) page. SORHs that are interested in adapting the brochure for their use can contact Hospodar for more information, at [hospodar@email.arizona.edu](mailto:hospodar@email.arizona.edu) or 520-626-2432.

## New AHRQ Database Offers Patient Safety Resources

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released a new [Patient Safety Education and Training Catalog](#) consisting of 333 patient safety programs currently available in the United States (as of Nov. 2011). The catalog offers an easily navigable

database of patient safety education and training programs consisting of a robust collection of information, each tagged for easy searching and browsing. The new database identifies a number of characteristics of the programs, including clinical area, program

and learning objectives, evaluation measures, and cost. Developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) from Internet searches in 2010 and 2011, the catalog captures a snapshot of available programs at the time.

## New Rural HIT Workforce Program and Grant

A new Rural Health Information Technology (HIT) Workforce Development Program grant has been announced. The purpose of the ORHP Rural HIT Workforce Development program is to support formal rural health networks that focus on activities relating to the recruitment, education, training, and retention of HIT specialists. This program will also provide support to rural health networks that can leverage and enhance existing HIT training materials to develop formal training programs, which will provide instructional opportunities to current health care staff, local displaced

workers, rural residents, veterans, and other potential students. These formal training programs will result in the development of a cadre of HIT workers who can help rural hospitals and clinics implement and maintain systems, such as electronic health records (EHR), telehealth, home monitoring and mobile health technology, and meet EHR meaningful use standards. Closing date for the grant is April 15, 2013. To read more about the grant and/or to apply, visit the [Rural HIT Workforce grant page](#) at Grants.gov. For more information, contact Janice Mompoin, MPH, Rural HIT Workforce Development Program Coordinator

at the Office of Rural Health Policy, at [jmompoin@hrsa.gov](mailto:jmompoin@hrsa.gov) or 301-443-8344.

### Additional information:

A recording of the February 26, 2013 NOSORH webinar, What SORHs Need to Know About the Rural Health Information Technology (HIT) Workforce Program, in addition to a PowerPoint presentation, is available on the NOSORH [Past Webinar Materials](#) web page.