



**National Rural
Health Association**
Rural Health Equity Conference
May 6-7, 2024 — New Orleans, LA

Monday, May 6

1 – 1:15 p.m.

Conference Welcome

Alan Morgan, MPA, NRHA CEO

Mary-Katherine Smith McNatt, DrPH, MPH, NRHA Health Equity Council Chair

1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Opening Plenary

Promoting Equitable Healthcare Delivery in Rural Communities

Benjamin Anderson, MBA, Hutchinson Regional Healthcare System, President & Chief Executive Officer

Duane Reynolds, MHA, Chartis, Chief Health Equity Officer and President, Chartis Center for Health Equity & Belonging

Michael Topchik, Chartis, National Director, The Chartis Center for Rural Health

Efforts to counter rural health disparities and advance health equity are increasingly influenced by emerging government regulations, social pressures, and financial sustainability, adding layers of complexity for hospital leadership teams. This session will explore components for an effective health equity strategy that meets regulatory requirements to eliminate health disparities.

2:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Networking Break, Poster Session

2:45 – 4 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

1A. CDC Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction Rural Efforts

Laura Kollar, PhD, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Senior Health Scientist/Health Equity Officer

Robin Rinker, MPH, CDC/NCIPC/DOP, Communication Branch Chief

Brenton Guy, MS, CDC/NCIPC/DOP, Team Lead

Jessica Wolff, MPH, CDC/NCIPC/DOP, Team Lead

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Overdose Prevention invests in overdose prevention in rural communities – including harm reduction. Panel will feature CDC staff discussing equity-focused rural health activities in local public health encompassing public safety partnerships, formative communication campaigns, and the Drug-Free Communities program.

Beyond Incarceration: Improving Outcomes for Women and Families affected by Substance Use Disorder

Dallas McCance, MPS, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences, Center for Rural Health, Director of Programs

This session will address the effectiveness, challenges, and successes of deploying telehealth services within rural jails, virtual care coordination using evidence-based practices, and continuum of care for women and families once they exit the justice system. It will provide an overview of successful case studies involving rural consortia leveraging resources.

1B. Addressing Rural Dementia Disparities in Minnesota with CBPR

Joshua Fergen, PhD, University of Minnesota Medical School - Duluth, Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team, Senior Research Associate

Kristen Jacklin, PhD, University of Minnesota Medical School - Duluth, Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team, Executive Director

Joshua Fergen, PhD, University of Minnesota Medical School - Duluth, Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team, Senior Research Associate

Dereck Salisbury, PhD, University of Minnesota School of Nursing, Assistant Professor

Limited insight into dementia disparities in rural and Indigenous populations is partially attributed to underrepresentation in research. Community-based participatory approaches can mitigate these limitations. This session shares an ethical model for rural and Indigenous community engagement, ethnographic findings on rural and Indigenous dementia experiences, and a rural dementia exercise intervention.

1C. Indigenizing Gender-Affirming Care for Transgender Native American Populations

Hannah Wenger, MD, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Physician Consultant

Itai Jeffries, PhD, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Program Director, Paths (Re)Membered Project

Jack Bruno, MSW, Transhealth

We will address best practices in gender-affirming care (GAC) through an intersectional lens of Indigeneity and rurality in the US. We will discuss the sociocultural, historical, political, and structural context for provisioning Indigenous GAC and engage participants in a demonstration of an ECHO telementoring session on Indigenous GAC.

Improving Primary Care for LGBTQIA+ and Neurodivergent Youth

Reese Ramponi, APRN, PMHNP-BC, Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner

Joel Ramirez, MD, Camarena Health, Chief Medical Officer

Cassalyn David, MPH, Mariposa Community Health Center, Behavioral Health Program Director

With sufficient training, rural federally qualified health centers are well-positioned to expand equity for under-represented populations. This panel explores best practices for LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent youth in healthcare, steps two rural FQHCs are taking to advance inclusive care for these populations, and how a community of practice supports these initiatives.

4 – 4:15 p.m.

Networking Break, Poster Session

4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Concurrent Session

2A. Critical Access Hospital Engagement with Social Needs Data

Madeleine Pick, MPH, Flex Monitoring Team at the University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Research Fellow

In this session, we will describe demographic and social needs data that are currently being collected by Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) and provide examples of best practices for how CAHs use these data to improve health equity in their communities, as informed by interviews with CAHs and other stakeholders.

Social Drivers of Health in Value-Based Care

Whitney Zahnd, PhD, University of Iowa College of Public Health, Assistant Professor

Jenifer Murray, RN, MPH, Northern MI Community Health Innovation Region, Public Health Consultant

Rocco Gonzalez, MPH, CPH, Mercy Health System, Community Health, Access, and Informatics Director

Rural Health Value hosted a summit with rural leaders to share insights on the intersection of rural providers and communities; value-based care, and social drivers of health (SDOH). During this session, summit facilitators and panelists will discuss strategies rural hospitals may employ to address SDOH and align with value-based care.

2B. RCORP's Service to America: An Equity-Based Approach

2C. Life along the border at 1.5 degrees above normal

Mary-Katherine McNatt, DrPH, MPH, ATSU College of Graduate Health Studies Public Health Department, Chair and Professor, Public Health Department

Marsha Presley, PhD, MPH, ATSU College of Graduate Health Studies Public Health Department, Research Associate & Adjunct Faculty

Susan Thomas, M.S. Ed., B.M.E., ATSU College of Graduate Health Studies Public Health Department, Instructional Designer & Adjunct Faculty

This session explores how climate shifts are affecting southern rural, border, and tribal communities and how increasing temperatures and dwindling water threaten the life, health, and livelihoods of the residents. What policy changes and actions would help alleviate the ongoing crisis?

Climate Change's Impact on Border Region One Health

David Line, PhD, MPH, MSW, Midwestern University, Program Director

This session examines climate change's impact on One Health in rural border region communities. The session will review the relationship of One Health to rural border communities. Then we will look at how climate change impacts the One Health based economic, social, and cultural equity in vulnerable populations.

Tuesday, May 7

7 – 8 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

Poster Session

8:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Opening Plenary

Medical Debt: Implications for Rural Health Equity

Carrie Henning-Smith, PhD, MPH, MSW, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Associate Professor

Alexis Swendener, PhD, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Postdoctoral Associate

Ingrid Jacobson, MPH, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Research Fellow

Katie Rydberg, MPH, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Program Manager

Medical debt is widespread and impacts financial well-being, health, and access to care. This session will describe rural/urban inequities in medical debt and healthcare affordability, as well as within-rural inequities by race, ethnicity, and health status. We will also describe equity implications of medical debt for rural safety net hospitals

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Networking Break, Poster Session

9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

3A. Trauma-informed care: Moving from buzzword to practice

Mina Tanaka, MD, MPH, Northern Navajo Medical Center, Internal Medicine Physician

Lucinda Nakai, MSW, LMSW, Northern Navajo Medical Center, Medical social worker

Experiences of trauma can impart adverse health effects but trauma-informed care that infuses compassion into healthcare interactions can mitigate these effects. This session will describe the current landscape and the importance of trauma-informed care in rural settings with a special focus on Indigenous populations and the impact of historical trauma.

Leading with Race: Conversations with Health Department Staff

Andrea Nicoletta, Vermont Department of Health, Health Equity Team Lead and CHW Coordinator

Amy Redman, Ph.D., Vermont Department of Health, Environmental Justice and Health Equity Advisor

Nicole Waweru, MPH, Vermont Department of Health, Health Equity Team Lead

In 2023, the Vermont Department of Health embarked on a Workforce Development and Health Equity initiative called Communities of Practice: Leading with Race. As a rural and predominantly white state, this training invited over 500 staff members to talk about racism and what it means to be an anti-racist organization.

3B. Behavioral Health Best Practices and Challenges in Border Communities

3C. U.S. policies threaten Native American access to water

Mary-Katherine McNatt, DrPH, MPH, ATSU College of Graduate Health Studies Public Health Department, Chair and Professor, Public Health Department

Marsha Presley, PhD, MPH, ATSU College of Graduate Health Studies Public Health Department, Research Associate & Adjunct Faculty

Susan Thomas, M.S. Ed., B.M.E., AT Still University College of Graduate Health Studies, Instructional Designer & Adjunct Faculty

Tó éí ííńá át'é. Water is life. This session examines how ongoing U.S. water policies in the Colorado River basin affect struggles in 30 Colorado River basin tribes to access clean water and how a paucity of potable water threatens indigenous health and ways of life.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.

Networking Break, Poster Session

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Concurrent Session

4A. Enrollment Assistance: Decreasing disparities by place and race

Susie Gurzenda, MS, Cecil G Shep Center for Health Services Research, Graduate Research Assistant

Natalie Marles, BS, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Health Insurance Navigator Manager

Dawn Baldwin Gibson, PhD, MA, Peletah, Executive Pastor and Executive Director

Madison Allen, JD, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, Senior Program Officer

North Carolina's leadership in Marketplace health insurance enrollment is thanks to diverse partnerships with enrollment assisters serving rural and historically under-insured communities. This panel of a funder, navigator program manager, researcher, and community leader highlights collaboration to decrease disparities by place, race, and ethnicity through quality, affordable health insurance.

4B. Supporting rural victims of intimate partner violence

Alyssa Fritz, MPH, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Research and Policy Fellow

This session will share findings from key informant interviews with local and national organizations that support rural victims of intimate partner violence (IPV), and describe challenges and opportunities for ensuring health and safety for rural victims, with attention to race/ethnicity, poverty, and pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Violence during pregnancy: racial/ethnic differences among rural residents

Emily Sheffield, MPH, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Ms.

Perinatal intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common and preventable contributor to maternal morbidity and mortality. This session will describe differences in experiences of physical IPV and postpartum abuse screening

among rural residents who gave birth, with attention to differences in these outcomes at the intersections of rurality and race/ethnicity.

Silence surrounding intimate partner violence in rural communities

Anna Mullany, PhD, Emory University - Rollins School of Public Health, Postdoctoral Fellow

Rural settings are often depicted as idyllic and harmonious close-knit communities. For women experiencing intimate partner violence, however, they are often met with stigma and silence. This session will examine what I call the “political economy of silence” and how rural communities hold unique potential to support survivors in distress.

4C. Healthcare Access for Migrant Workers in Rural Missouri

Kandice Grossman, PhD, University of Missouri, Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Sociology Department)

Joan Hermsen, PhD, University of Missouri, Associate Professor of Sociology

Rebecca Scott, PhD, University of Missouri, Associate Professor of Sociology

This session examines and compares migrant workers’ healthcare access and resource experiences in two rural Missouri towns. Although both populations are primarily employed in corporate meat packing plants, experiences related to healthcare differ in each place significantly based on levels of community social support and social and political environments.

Bridging the gap between clinical-practices and community health

Eisha Khan, MPH, MaineHealth, Program Manager

Dora Mills, MD, MPH, FAAP, MaineHealth, Chief Health Improvement Officer

Eisha Khan, MPH, MaineHealth, Program Manager

Join MaineHealth, the largest healthcare system in the nation's most rural state, as we share our approach for social determinates of health. Discover how trauma-informed care, community engagement, and statewide partnerships are transforming health access, addressing rural and racial inequities, and creating a model aligning clinical-practices with public health needs.

12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Plenary Presentation

Increasing Diversity in Kansas and Missouri Healthcare Workforce

Alana Knudson, PhD, NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, Director

Jane Mosley, PhD, Health Forward Foundation, Director of Evaluation and Learning

Lisse Regehr, BA, Thrive Kansas and Thrive Allen County, President and CEO

This session highlights the Health Forward Foundation’s efforts to increase diversity in the healthcare workforce serving rural and other under-represented communities in Kansas and Missouri. Community-based organizations, healthcare providers, and educational institutions engage to guide data collection efforts, review findings, and identify short and long-term opportunities to increase workforce diversity.

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Networking Break, Poster Session

2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Concurrent Session

5A. Pharmacists: Filling the Gaps in Rural Healthcare

Emily Eddy, PharmD, Ohio Northern University Raabe College of Pharmacy, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Stuart Beatty, PharmD, Ohio Northern University Raabe College of Pharmacy, Dean

Michelle Musser, PharmD, Ohio Northern University Raabe College of Pharmacy, Professor of Pharmacy Practice

T'Bony Jewell, PharmD, MBA, Ohio Northern University Raabe College of Pharmacy, Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Pharmacists serve as vital members on the healthcare team, poised to fill gaps as provider extenders and impact care in rural healthcare deserts. Speakers will highlight pharmacist-provided care initiatives addressing mental health and chronic disease within a rural community pharmacy, a mobile clinic, and a college of pharmacy.

A Shot At Equity: Overcoming Racial Health Inequities

Kristin Motley, PharmD, MBA, Health Educated, Inc, Founder and Executive Director

This talk presents strategies for tackling COVID vaccine hesitancy in underserved communities, focusing on culturally sensitive approaches. The framework used to successfully overcome vaccine hesitancy will be demonstrated, offering adaptable methods for rural settings to effectively address health disparities.

5B. Health Literacy and Access in Unincorporated Rural-Border Communities

Shiloh Williams, PhD, San Diego State University, Assistant Professor

Helina Hoyt, PhD, San Diego State University, Assistant Professor, Associate Director

This session will examine the health needs of low income, unincorporated communities along the California-Mexico border. Participants will gain a better understanding of the intersection between low health literacy, social determinants of health and health behaviors of diverse rural-border populations with an emphasis on exploring strategies to promote health equity.

Kuleana Health: Health Literacy on Hawaii Island

Randy Kurohara, BA, Community First Hawaii, Executive Director

Lee-Ann Heely, M.Ed, DM, Hawaii Island Community Health Center, Director of Health Equity

Community First Hawaii will present on how it's Kuleana Health project elevated health literacy on Hawaii Island for both providers and community members targeting our most rural and disadvantaged communities. We utilized community focus groups, community health centers, and a variety of partners to deliver health literacy in innovative ways.

5C. Mapping Arizona's CHW Potential in Rural (MAP Project)

Floribella Redondo, BS, Arizona Community Health Worker Association, CEO

Susan Kunz, MPH, Susan Kunz Consulting, Public health

The MAP Project (Mapping Arizona's CHW Potential) is identifying rural organizations and communities where CHWs are not utilized or underutilized, as well as assessing capacity-building needs of those organizations that utilize CHWs. The results will prioritize where CHW core competency and CHW supervisor training is needed to improve health outcomes.

Arming Community Health Workers to Fight Care Inequities: A Martha's Vineyard Case Study

James Wolff, MD, MPH, MAT, BMS, Island Health Care, Chief Medical Officer

Kathleen Samways, DPT, PT, Island Health Care, Chief Public Health Officer

Lauren Fox, MSc in Communication, Culture, and Media Studies, Dimagi, Senior Project Manager

Federally-qualified health center Island Health Care, seeks to bridge care gaps and boost health equity by utilizing digitally-enabled community health workers (CHWs) to provide care outside of traditional facilities. Island and

Dimagi will provide replicable insights into how care-coordination tools enable CHWs to improve care delivery for rural, underserved patients.

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Plenary Presentation

Lessons learned through development of rural clinical-community linkages

Jennifer Conner, DrPH, MPH, MAP, American Heart Association, Vice President for Rural Health, SouthWest Region

Tim Nikolai, BS, American Heart Association, Senior Rural Health Director, Midwest Region

Jessica Black, RD MPH, American Heart Association, National Vice President, Community Health

Innovative clinical-community linkages created in collaboration with rural libraries, food pantries, agricultural partners, and other local stakeholders can address rural health disparities. Community “health hubs” can be established for Self-Monitoring Blood Pressure programs, food security initiatives, and rural CPR education. Lessons from this rural community impact work will be shared.

5:15 p.m.

Conference Adjourns

Thank you for your attendance and your continued support of NRHA and the Health Equity Conference! Join us next year in Atlanta, GA on May 19-20, 2024.