

# NRHA Rural Health Clinic & Critical Access Hospital Conferences 2026 • Sept. 15-18, Kansas City, Mo.

All general sessions take place in Exhibit Hall B unless otherwise indicated • Subject to change • Updated 9-11-26

| Rural Health Clinic Conference |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, September 15          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 1 – 1:15 pm                    | Welcome (15 m)                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 1:15 – 2:30 pm                 | <b>Plenary 1 – Keynote Session What If We're Wrong?</b> (75 min)<br><i>Blake Kramer, Franklin Medical Center, Administrator</i>                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 2:30 – 3:30 pm                 | <b>Plenary 2 - Regulatory and Legislative Updates for Rural Health Clinics</b> (60 min)<br><i>Sarah Hohman, National Association of Rural Health Clinics, Government affairs director</i> |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 3:30 – 3:45 pm                 | Break - Exhibit Hall Foyer                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 3:45 – 5 pm                    | <b>1A – Organized Compliance: Building Practical Systems That Work</b><br>Julie Quinn, Tressa Sacrey                                                                                      | <b>1B – Federal Partner Update +</b><br>Lindsey Nienstedt                                                | <b>1C – Winning the Denials Battle Through Prevention and Resolution</b><br>Ryan Breneman, Amy Graham                                  |
| Room                           | Chicago A                                                                                                                                                                                 | Chicago B                                                                                                | Chicago C                                                                                                                              |
| Wednesday, Sept 16             |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 7 – 8 am                       | Continental Breakfast, Registration – Exhibit Hall                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 8 – 9:15 am                    | <b>2A – Don't Outsource the Relationship: Keeping CCM In-House in Rural Health</b><br>Jill Hewett                                                                                         | <b>2B – 15 Best Practices for Rural Health Clinic Leaders</b><br>Sydney Grant, Kate Hill, Joanie Perkins | <b>2C – The Illusion of Accuracy: AI vs. Expertise</b><br>Cassie Beesley, Amanda Dennison<br>Patty Harper                              |
| Room                           | Chicago A                                                                                                                                                                                 | Chicago B                                                                                                | Chicago C                                                                                                                              |
| 9:15 – 9:30 am                 | Break - Exhibit Hall Foyer                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 9:30 – 10:45 am                | <b>3A – State Flex Program Support for Rural Health Clinics</b><br>John Gale, Bridget Harr                                                                                                | <b>3B – Putting Compliance into Action: From Regulations to Results</b><br>Kate Hill                     | <b>3C – Reimagining Rural Behavioral Health Staffing for Scale and Sustainability +</b><br>Susan Kramer, Lauren Miller<br>Anna Swanson |
| Room                           | Chicago A                                                                                                                                                                                 | Chicago B                                                                                                | Chicago C                                                                                                                              |
| 10:45 – 11 am                  | Break - Exhibit Hall Foyer                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 11 – 11:45 am                  | <b>Plenary 3 – Clinic Flow Excellence – Enhancing the Financial Health of Your Health Care System</b><br><i>Loree Tamayo, Loree Tamayo Consulting, CEO and owner</i> (45 min)             |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| 11:45 am – 1 pm                | Rural Health Clinic Conference lunch on your own                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |

| Rural Health Clinic Conference continues and Critical Access Hospital Conference begins |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| 1 – 1:15 pm                                                                             | Welcome & Announcements (15m)                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1:15 – 2:30 pm                                                                          | <b>Plenary 4 - Keynote Address</b> (75 m)<br><b>A Road Map for Integrating the Tools of AI into a Rural Hospital Strategic Plan</b><br><i>Andrew M. Ibrahim, MD, MSc, University of Michigan, George D. Zuidema professor of surgery</i> |
| 2:30 – 3 pm                                                                             | Break - Exhibit Hall Foyer                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| 3 – 4 pm                      | <b>Plenary 5 - National Legislative Update (60 m)</b><br><i>Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, National Rural Health Association, Chief policy officer</i>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4 – 5 pm                      | <b>Plenary 6 - Rural Hospital Replacement: 25 Years of Evidence (60 min)</b><br>Brian Haapala, Stroudwater Capital Partners, CEO; Arlene Harms, Rio Grande Hospital, CEO |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5 – 7 pm                      | <b>RHC-CAH Networking Reception – Exhibit Hall A</b>                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Thursday, September 17</b> |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 7 – 8 am                      | <b>Breakfast With Partners – Exhibit Hall Foyer</b>                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 8 – 9 am                      | <b>Plenary Session 7 - The Federal Regulatory Impact on CAHs (60 min)</b><br><i>Brian Bertsch, Eide Bailly LLP, Principal; Joseph Watt, Forvis Mazars, Partner</i>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9 – 10:50 am                  | Networking break – Exhibit Hall                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                               | 9:10 – 9:55 am                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Partner Featured Session A – Impossible Was the Baseline</b><br><i>Laura Kreofsky, Microsoft Elevate, Rural and community health national director</i><br><i>Ryan Thousand, Dahl Memorial Healthcare, CIO</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10:50 – 11 am                 | <b>Break</b>                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11 am – 12:15 pm              | <b>4A</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>4B</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>4C</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>4D</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>4E</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>4F</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
|                               | <b>Making the Business Case for Rural Networks: The What, Why, and How +</b><br>Tom Morris<br>Eric Shell<br>Brock Slabach                                                | <b>Denial Prevention AI: Two Colorado CAHs Share ROI</b><br>Beth Bell<br>Katherine Mulready, JD<br>Kevin Stansbury, JD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>What Drug Inflation Is Hiding From You</b><br>Justin Comeau, PharmD<br>Marianne Nichols, PharmD                          | <b>Collaboration to Compete: Turning One RN Turnover Cost Into Four Graduate Placements</b><br>Theresa Braudt<br>Cynde Larsen, PhD<br>Hannah Shirkey | <b>From Framework to Practice: Implementing the 4Ms in Rural Critical Access Hospitals ^</b><br>Joy Hughes<br>Rebecca Yeboah | <b>Fellowship to Frontline: Strengthening Rural Health Nursing Workforce</b><br>Angela Johnson, EdD<br>Joachim Voss                                                |
| Room                          | Atlanta                                                                                                                                                                  | New York A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | New York B                                                                                                                  | Chicago A                                                                                                                                            | Chicago B                                                                                                                    | Chicago C                                                                                                                                                          |
| 12:15 – 1:50 pm               | <b>Networking Lunch – Exhibit Hall Foyer</b>                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                               | 1 – 1:45 p.m.                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Partner Featured Session B – The Rural Health Technology Showcase: Innovations for Every Patient &amp; Every Mile</b><br><i>Gabriele Armijo, Electronic Caregiver, Business Development manager</i><br><i>Monica Coley, DHI, Amazon Web Services, Health informaticist and senior business development manager</i><br><i>John Shorter, Ruvos, Director of Strategy</i><br><i>Faisal Sublaban, MD, AskMd, Executive vice president</i> |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 1:50 – 2 pm                   | <b>Break</b>                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2 – 3:15 pm                   | <b>5A</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>5B</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>5C</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>5D</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>5E</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>5F</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
|                               | <b>What High-Performing Rural CFOs Do Differently</b><br>Bryant Blay<br>Connie Costigan<br>Diane Moore, Tyler Moss<br>Theresa Tabor                                      | <b>Stronger by Design: Federal TA That Helps Rural Hospitals Thrive +</b><br>Meredith Anderson<br>Michael Fallahkahair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Delivering Sustainable Workforce Efficiency Without Technology Investment</b><br>Charlene Boyer, DHA<br>Jessica Drummond | <b>Strategic Risk Stratification: What Analysis and Case Studies Reveal</b><br>Matthew Gritters, MD<br>Jeffrey Sommer<br>Joe Theine                  | <b>Partnering to Improve Maternal–Infant Access and Outcomes &gt;</b><br>Sina Haeri, MD<br>Dawn Steiner, MD                  | <b>Transforming Rural Care—Maximizing Outcomes &amp; Community Impact #</b><br>Elizabeth Birgy<br>Jeremy Cannon<br>Steve Dentel<br>Amber Humphrey<br>Shaina Madrid |
| Room                          | Atlanta                                                                                                                                                                  | New York A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | New York B                                                                                                                  | Chicago A                                                                                                                                            | Chicago B                                                                                                                    | Chicago C                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3:15 – 3:30 pm                | <b>Break - Exhibit Hall Foyer</b>                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                    |

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| 3:30 – 4:30 pm       | <b>Plenary 8 – Plumas Model: Midwifery Integration Restoring Rural Maternity Care (60 m)</b><br><i>Lisette Brown, Population health director; JoDee Johnson, CEO,<br/>Tiffany Leonhardt, Business development director; Lori Link, Midwifery director, Plumas District Hospital</i> |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 4:30 – 5:15 pm       | <b>Plenary 9 - Understanding the Needs of Frontier Critical Access Hospitals (45 min)</b><br><i>John Gale, Cutler Institute and Maine Rural Health Research Center, Senior research associate;<br/>Jack King, Montana Hospital Association, Program specialist</i>                  |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| Friday, September 18 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 8 – 8:30 am          | Breakfast - Exhibit Hall Foyer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 8:30 – 9:15 am       | <b>Plenary 10 - Top 20 CAHs Awards Presentation (45 m)</b><br><i>Troy Brown, Chartis Center for Rural Health, Network consultant and performance improvement specialist<br/>Brock Slabach, NRHA, Chief operations officer</i>                                                       |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 9:15 – 9:30 am       | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 9:30 – 10:45 am      | <b>6A</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>6B</b>                                                                                                                | <b>6C</b>                                                                       | <b>6D</b>                                                                                    | <b>6E</b>                                                                                               |
|                      | <b>Operationalizing<br/>Apprenticeship in Rural<br/>Health Care</b><br>Angela Bennett<br>Alyssa Burgess                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Advancing Rural Clinical<br/>Readiness Through Simulation</b><br>Michelle Hansen<br>Clint Pridgen<br>Tamara Smith, DO | <b>When No One Speaks Up,<br/>Rural Patients Suffer</b><br>Stephen Williams, MD | <b>Sustaining Rural Hospitals<br/>Through Payment and<br/>Care Innovation +</b><br>Anna Anna | <b>Growing GME in Critical<br/>Access Hospitals +</b><br>John Boll, DO<br>Lori Rodefeld<br>Jason Steele |
| Room                 | Atlanta                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | New York A                                                                                                               | New York B                                                                      | Chicago A                                                                                    | Chicago B                                                                                               |
| 10:45 am             | CAH Adjourns                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                         |

+ Sessions sponsored by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (RHC – 1, CAH – 2, and 3 more created by FORHP)

^ Session sponsored by The John A. Hartford Foundation/NRHA National Rural Age Friendly Initiative (CAH – 1) (Laura & Becky)

# Session sponsored by The American Heart Association (RHC or CAH – 1) (Gaby)

> Session sponsored by Centene (CAH-1) (Amy)