

**National Rural Health Association  
49<sup>th</sup> Annual Rural Health Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Rural Hospital Innovation Summit  
May 19-22, 2026 – San Diego, CA**

***Agenda***

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026**

**5 – 7 p.m.**

**Exhibit Hall Welcome**

**Seaport D-H**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**

**7:00-8:00 a.m.**

**Breakfast**

**Seaport Foyer**

**8 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Opening Session & Keynote**

**Seaport ABC**

*Kate Sapro, PhD, CMS, Deputy Director of the Office of Rural Health Transformation*

Hear the latest update from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the early outcomes of the Rural Health Transformation Program and learn about opportunities for stakeholders to engage in advancing rural health.

**9:30 – 10:45 a.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**1A**

**Community Health Workers and Promotores: What the Work Really Looks Like**

**Balboa ABC**

*Heather Clark, DrPH, Texas A&M University School of Public Health, Assistant Professor of Practice*

*Gabriela Boscan Fauquier, National Rural Health Association, Senior Director of Program Services and Development*

This session explores data from a five-year collaboration with NRHA to better understand the similarities and differences in employment characteristics and roles of rural community health workers and CHWs. Data collected include work settings, topic areas, job responsibilities,

training preferences, and more. Differences between states, job titles, and job expectations will be discussed. Speakers will discuss the current five-year extension of this project as well.

## **1B**

### **Artificial Intelligence in Rural Healthcare**

#### **Gaslamp AB**

*Qian Huang, PhD, MA, MPA, East Tennessee State University, Research Assistant Professor*

*Whitney Zahnd, PhD, University of Iowa, Assistant Professor*

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

*Jue Wang, PhD, University of Toronto, Assistant Professor*

This session explores practical applications, emerging opportunities, and critical challenges associated with implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in rural healthcare. Attendees will examine the evolving policy landscape, identify strategies to overcome implementation barriers, and discuss collaborative approaches to leverage AI effectively, improving healthcare access and reducing disparities within rural communities.

## **1C**

### **Justice Without The Juris Doctor: Bridging Legal Gaps in Health Care (FORHP)**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*Anna Feins, BA, FORHP, HRSA, Program Coordinator of Black Lung Clinics Program*

*Bradley Johnson, CRT, Stone Mountain Health Services, Director of Lay Advocacy*

This session explores a HRSA-funded rural black lung clinic providing free, non-lawyer legal representation for coal miners. Learn how benefits counseling and court advocacy embedded in health settings can improve outcomes, secure compensation, and offer a replicable model for rural health providers working at the intersection of health and justice.

## **1D**

### **Powering Rural Health Through State Partnerships**

#### **Old Town AB**

*Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, Nebraska Rural Health Association, Executive Director*

*Margaret Woeppel, MSN, RN, CPHQ, FACHE, Nebraska Hospital Association, Chief Nursing & Informatics Officer*

Explore how Nebraska's Rural Health and Hospital Associations joined forces to advance rural health. Through case studies in Age-Friendly, maternal health, and dental access. This session highlights how blending clinical data expertise with grassroots infrastructure knowledge creates

impactful, scalable solutions for rural communities through shared advocacy, education, and data-driven initiatives.

## **1E**

### **Recruiting and Retaining Nurses to Critical Access Hospitals**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*David Schmitz, MD, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Professor and Chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine*

*Stacy Kusler, BA, CPRP, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Workforce Specialist*

The Community Apgar Project encompasses national research service projects enabling rural communities to assess and improve capabilities for recruitment and retention of providers including nurses, physicians, and CEOs. This updated program is specific to recruiting and retaining nurses to CAH rural communities. Presenters will also share the North Dakota findings.

## **1F**

### **State Lessons in Advancing Rural Health Policy**

#### **Coronado A**

*Cody Mullen, PhD, Purdue University, Clinical Professor, Department of Public Health; Director of Master of Health Administration Program*

State laws and policies significantly shape rural health outcomes. This session features policy experts collaborating with legislators and agencies across multiple states, sharing effective strategies and tools for advancing state-level policy education and advocacy to improve rural health.

## **RHIS – Operations Track**

### **Sustaining Rural Maternity Care Services**

#### **Coronado D**

*Marie Barry, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC), Director of Community Economic & Workforce Development*

*Christine Trautmad, MD, Reedsburg Area Medical Center, OBGYN*

*Melody Hargis, MSN, RN, Door County Medical Center, Director, Inpatient Services*

*Theresa Hollinger, MHA, MSN RN, NEA-BC, Grant Regional Health Center, Chief Nursing Officer*

The Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative launched a Maternity Services Workgroup to maximize the ongoing supply and quality of maternity services in rural Wisconsin. Hear from member

CAHs about the collaborative strategies being utilized to help preserve and sustain access to and quality of maternity care in rural communities.

## **RHIS – APM / VBC**

### **Leveraging Rural Data to Create Meaningful Public Policy**

#### **Coronado E**

*Jim Lee, Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Senior Vice President of Data Policy & Analytics*

*Michael Shepherd, University of Michigan, Assistant Professor*

*Jeremiah Hodshire, Hillsdale Hospital, President & CEO*

This session will highlight the innovative approach the Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) took to supporting rural hospitals after the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025. The session will highlight the collaborations between a University of Michigan rural researcher and key stakeholders across the state.

## **1G**

### **Contributed Research Papers - Rural Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder**

#### **Coronado B**

- 1. Access and Perceived Barriers to Substance Use Treatment**  
*Tamika D. Gilreath, PhD, Texas A&M University School of Public Health, Professor*
- 2. Rural and Urban Availability of Substance Use Treatment Facilities**  
*Ty Borders, PhD, TCU, Professor and Chair*
- 3. Acceptability of Harm Reduction Services in Rural Wyoming**  
*Ruth Korankye, University of Wyoming, Research Assistant*
- 4. Older Adults' Mental Health Treatment Use: Rural-Urban Differences**  
*Carrie Henning-Smith, PhD, University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, Associate Professor*

**10:45 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Poster Session/Break**

**Seaport Foyer**

**11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**Plenary Session – Health Resources and Services Administration Health Update**

**Seaport ABC**

*Tom Morris, M.P.A., Federal Office of Rural Health Policy/HRSA, Associate Administrator*

*Candice Chen, M.D., M.P.H., Bureau of Health Workforce/HRSA, Acting Associate Administrator for Health Workforce*

This session will provide updates regarding key federal activities that help improve access to quality health care in rural communities.

**12:15 – 2:30 p.m.**

**Lunch in Exhibit Hall**

**Seaport D-H**

**1:30 - 2:15 p.m.**

**Building Viable Governance for Safe AI in Rural & Community Health**

**Seaport ABC**

*Laura Kreofsky, Microsoft, Director of Rural Health Resiliency*

*Tyler Wallace, PhD, Scale Street Healthcare AI Training, Principal Consultant*

**1:30 – 5:00 p.m.**

**Student Track Session/Student Constituency Group Meeting**

**Room TBA**

**2:30 – 3:45 p.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**2A**

**Obstetric and neonatal care access in rural communities**

**Balboa ABC**

*Katy Kozhimannil, PhD, MPA, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Distinguished McKnight University Professor*

*Julia Interrante, PhD, MPH, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Research Fellow*

*Emily Sheffield, MPH, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Doctoral Student*

*Kevan O'Hanlon, University of Minnesota, Project Coordinator*

Amidst rising maternal and infant mortality, both of which are elevated for rural residents, access to childbirth and higher-level neonatal care services are essential. This session provides updates on maternity and neonatal care closures, examines factors in proximity to neonatal intensive care units, and describes predictors of obstetric unit closures.

**2B**

**Closing Gaps: Smart Staffing in Rural Psychiatry Programs**

**Gaslamp AB**

*Vishal Adma, MD, Integrated Psychiatric Consultants, President and CEO*  
*Heidi Monroe, DBH, Johnson Memorial Health, Director of Behavioral Health*

Rural communities face barriers in accessing timely psychiatric care due to provider shortages, coverage gaps, and inconsistent oversight. This session presents innovative staffing strategies to expand rural program capacity and improve clinical outcomes, offering a practical framework for single-source staffing and highlighting a successful implementation at a rural psychiatric hospital.

## **2C**

### **The Future of Rural Health: An Interactive Discussion**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*John Gale, MS, Maine Rural Health Research Center and Cutler Institute, Senior Research Associate*

Learn how rural health providers are leveraging resources from community partners, foundations, and the private and public sectors to address patients' needs – food, housing, and transportation. Find out how the economic vitality of rural communities improves when social determinants of health are addressed. Resources and tools will be highlighted.

### **How rural hospitals could transform for the future of rural health**

*Kevin Bennett, PhD, University of South Carolina, Professor & Director*  
*JT Douglas, WestHealth, Director of Strategy*  
*Jeremy Levin, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, Director of Advocacy*

Discussion of the future of hospital service delivery, and the issues facing survival; discuss the potential of the Rural health transformation program and discuss specific examples of innovative programs; discuss what the future of rural hospital care could include, and how such care will need to evolve to survive.

## **2D**

### **Stronger Together: Rural Public Health and Primary Care**

#### **Old Town AB**

*Cody Mullen, PhD, Purdue University, Clinical Professor*  
*Michael Meit, MA, MPH, East Tennessee State University, Director, Center for Rural Health and Research*  
*Alana Knudson, PhD, NORC Walsh Research Center, Director*  
*Diane Hall, PhD, MEd, Office of Rural Health, CDC, Director*

This panel presentation session will include a discussion of the role of public health in rural communities, the response to past rural emergencies, and the connection between where primary care and public health meet. Hear solutions and resources to connect with local rural public health.

## **2E**

### **Data-Driven Solutions for Strengthening Rural Nurse Workforce**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*Qian Huang, PhD, MA, MPA, East Tennessee State University, Research Assistant Professor*  
*Kathleen Kinser, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, R, Tennessee Center for Nursing Advancement, Nurse Scientist*

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

This session highlights emerging tools and strategies to support rural nurse workforce planning, including Geographic Information Systems dashboards and integrated data systems. Learn how these innovations are shaping policy, addressing geographic disparities, and informing sustainable solutions to meet the evolving healthcare needs of rural communities.

## **2F – Implementing a Rural Aging Lens within SRHAs and RHTP Activities**

#### **Coronado A**

*Nancy Wexler, DBH, The John A. Hartford Foundation, Senior Program Officer*

*Rebecca Yeboah, National Rural Health Association, Program Coordinator*

*Jennifer Muthig, New York State Association for Rural Health (NYSARH), Executive Director*

*Andy Lowe, New England Rural Health Association (NERHA), Executive Director*

*Ann Marie Day, MBA, New England Rural Health Association (NERHA), Chief Operating Officer*

This session will focus on state-level partnerships and activities of the National Rural Age-Friendly Initiative (NRAFI) and how State Rural Health Associations (SRHAs) utilize funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation to elevate age-friendly priorities and strengthen rural health systems in their states. We will also highlight NRHA's NRAFI activities and resources concentrated around the state's older adult-focused Rural Health Transformation Program activities.

## **RHIS - Operations Track: Rural Hospital Closures: Early Warning Signs For Rural Leaders**

#### **Coronado D**

*Jeff Sommer, Stroudwater Associates, Managing Director*

The Stroudwater Rural Hospital Closure Study has been constructed to provide timely insights specifically for rural hospital leaders. The study also creates a framework for assessment of the risk of closure along with targeted action steps/course correct based on the early markers signifying increased risk of closure.

### **Rural Medicare Policy Updates (FORHP)**

Coronado E

*Courtney S. Turner, MPH, Policy Coordinator, HRSA/Federal Office of Rural Health Policy*

*Marguerite Peterseim, MPH, National Rural Health Association, Senior Government Affairs and Policy Coordinator*

*Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, National Rural Health Association, Chief Policy Officer*

This session will provide participants with an overview of recent Medicare policies that affect rural clinicians and health care facilities. Participants will learn about recent legislative changes affecting rural healthcare and CMS's recent or upcoming proposed policy changes. Participants will also hear about policy and research activities and resources from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and a future forecast of upcoming policy areas by NRHA.

## **2G**

### **Contributed Research Papers – Veterans Health**

Coronado B

- **Veteran Firearm Injury and Death Rates by Rurality**  
*Tess Gilbert, VA Portland Health Care System, Research Associate*
- **Exploring Innovative Pathways for Rural Native Veterans' Reintegration**  
*Cynthia Goss, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center - Salt Lake City, Population Specialist*
- **Enhancing Rural Veteran Access to Pelvic Health Rehabilitation**  
*Kristen Gray, PhD, Veterans Health Administration*
- **Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Rural Caregiver Identification**  
*Claire Grant, PhD, VA CHOIR, Postdoctoral Research Fellow*

**3:45 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Poster Session/Break**

**Seaport Foyer**

**4:00 – 5:15 p.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

### **3A**

#### **Improving Autism Primary Care in Rural Communities**

##### **Balboa ABC**

*Oyin Oloniniyi, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Program Manager, ECHO Initiatives*

*Erika Davis, PhD, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Manager, Program Evaluation*

*Erin Kelly, PhD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Director, Mental and Relational Health*

AAP NRACH ECHO training center will describe how an ECHO Autism Collaborative expands care for children with autism in rural primary care settings. We will show how ECHO learning increases capacity, fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, and improves access to neuroaffirming, trauma-informed care for autistic children in underserved communities.

#### **Building Capacity for Rural Pediatric Primary Care**

*Oyin Oloniniyi, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Program Manager, ECHO Initiatives*

*Erika Davis, PhD, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Manager, Program Evaluation*

*Erin Kelly, PhD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Director, Mental and Relational Health*

AAP will share insights from the NRACH ECHO Training Center, highlighting how it builds pediatric workforce capacity in rural and frontier communities. This session explores collaborative learning, mentorship, and practical tools that empower clinicians to address mental and behavioral health needs in underserved pediatric populations

### **3B**

#### **The Sustainable Rural Ecosystem: Create a lasting quality infrastructure via the American Heart Association Preventative, Acute, Chronic Disease Frameworks**

##### **Gaslamp AB**

*Mindy Cook, BSN, American Heart Association, Senior Director Rural Health Care Quality*

Explore how the American Heart Association's Preventative, Acute, and Chronic Disease frameworks strengthen sustainable rural ecosystems by improving hypertension control, acute cardiac and stroke care, and post-acute care integration. Learn how these efforts can align with Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) grants—an unprecedented opportunity for rural health innovation.

### **3C**

#### **TXREP, An Innovative Statewide Academic-Community Partnership**

##### **Gaslamp CD**

*Kia Parsi, MD, Texas A&M Rural and Community Institute (ARCHI), Executive Director*

*John Henderson, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals, President & CEO*  
*Melissa Lackey, MSN, RN, Texas A&M Rural and Community Institute (ARCHI), Director of Rural Health Support and Engagement*  
*Albert Ruiz, Texas State Office of Rural Health Program, Rural Health Specialist*

Texas A&M Rural Engagement Programs (TXREP) is an innovative legislative-funded initiative partnering an academic institution with community hospitals and clinics. The A&M Rural and Community Health Institute and other colleges leverage university resources to provide solutions for 100+ hospitals and clinics in Texas, improving operations and promoting workforce development opportunities.

### **3D**

#### **Strengthening the Evidence Base for Rural Health**

##### **Old Town AB**

*Michael Meit, MA, MPH, ETSU/NORC Rural Health Research Center, Deputy Director*  
*Shena Papat, MHA, NORC Walsh Research Center, Senior Research Scientist*  
*Lisa Davis, MHA, Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health, Director and Outreach Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration*

Expanding the rural health evidence base is essential for improving outcomes, yet many programs are developed and tested in urban contexts. This session explores the benefits, challenges, and key considerations for piloting and evaluating health-related programs in rural settings to generate relevant, actionable insights for rural communities.

### **3E**

#### **RHTP Bright Spots: Case Studies of Best Practices**

##### **La Jolla AB**

*John Henderson, CEO, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals*  
*Alfred Sams, CEO, Rough Riders Health Network, North Dakota*  
*Brock Slabach, NRHA, Chief Operations Officer*

The Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) was rapidly considered as part of H.R. 1 and quickly implemented, leading to the allocation of \$50 billion in less than three months. Despite this swift action, rural facilities have expressed concerns about whether they will benefit from the program. This session will highlight successful examples where RHTP resources are making a positive impact on rural healthcare providers. The goal is to showcase these bright spots and encourage the adoption of best practices in other states and local communities.

### 3F

#### **Policy and Implementation Strategies for MFT and MHC Integration (FORHP)**

##### **Coronado A**

*Holly Andrilla, MS, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington, Deputy Director,*

*Janessa Graves, PhD, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington, Director  
Garth Miller, MD, FACS, CRHCP, Whidbey Island Public Hospital District, Chief Operating Officer  
and Chief Medical Officer*

*Anna Swanson, MPA, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, Public Health Analyst*

Effective January 1, 2024, mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists can bill Medicare independently for mental illness diagnosis and treatment. Speakers will share lessons learned on supporting practitioner participation, billable service lines, patient and practitioner outcomes, and describe the evolving distribution and supply landscape following this policy change.

#### **RHIS – Operations Track**

##### **Prepared for the Unexpected: OB Emergencies in Rural EDs**

##### **Coronado D**

*Jacquelyn Alvarado, DNP, APRN, CNM, FACN, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, Director, Rural Maternal Health*

Rural Emergency Departments without obstetric services face unique challenges in maternal emergencies. This session presents a simulation-based training model that builds team readiness, improves maternal safety, and equips rural providers with low-cost, scalable tools to stabilize patients before transfer, reducing morbidity and mortality in underserved communities.

### 3G

#### **Contributed Research Papers – Maternal Health**

##### **Coronado B**

- **Maternal Care Designation and Utilization of prenatal care**  
*Songyuan Deng, PhD, University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Associate Scientist*
- **Financial Challenges of Providing Rural Obstetric Services**  
*Julia Interrante, PhD, University of Minnesota, Researcher/Statistical Lead*
- **Texas Rural-Urban Reimbursement Disparities for Maternal Delivery**  
*Reyann Davis, Texas A&M University, Director Value-Based*
- **Rural Maternal Health Outcomes Before and After Obstetric Unit Closures: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Access, Equity, and Workforce Impact**

*Sarvesh Mohan, Cornwall Hospital, Clinical Manager*

**Thursday, May 21, 2026**

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Constituency Group Meetings and Continental Breakfast**

*Public Health Status/Clinical Constituency Group – Gaslamp AB*

*Research & Education Constituency Group – Old Town AB*

*FQHC/Rural Health Clinic Constituency Group – Gaslamp CD*

*Statewide Health Resources Constituency Group – Coronado B*

*Hospital Constituency Group - Coronado D*

**9:00 – 10:15 a.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**4A**

**Trends in Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder**

**Balboa ABC**

*Holly Andrilla, MS, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Deputy Director & Research Scientist  
Principal*

*Janessa Graves, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Director*

*Sara Woolcock, MPH, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Research Scientist*

There is ongoing concern nationally about the opioid crisis. We will present findings on the availability and receipt of medication treatment for opioid use disorder (MOUD) nationally. We will present findings on the change in the receipt of MOUD in rural communities with and without RCORP funding and urban counties.

**4B**

**Remote Possibilities: Collective Defense for Rural Communities/Google**

**Gaslamp AB**

*Sarah Morales, Google, Senior Program Manager*

*Bill Reid, Google, Security Advisor*

Threats to rural healthcare are threats to the entire community. This session explores the shared cyber risks across healthcare, water, electricity, and local governments. Learn how an attack on one organization poses a collective risk and how healthcare providers can lead the creation of a community-wide collective defense.

## **4C**

### **Breaking Silos: Coordinating Rural School Mental Health Care**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*Amanda North, The Center for Rural Health Innovation, Executive Director*

Rural schools face severe mental health workforce shortages, fragmented care, and Medicaid billing barriers. This session shares results from a pilot integrating the Whole Child framework with the Collaborative Care Model to improve cross-agency collaboration, streamline services, and expand equitable school-based mental health care for rural North Carolina students.

### **School-Based Behavioral Telehealth for Rural Access**

*Claire MacGeorge, MD, MSCR, Medical University of South Carolina, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Medical Director of School-based Health*

*Caitlin Koob, PhD, MS, OTR/L, Medical University of South Carolina, Research Associate*

*Edrin Williams, DHA, Medical University of South Carolina, Center for Telehealth, Executive Director, Grants and Research*

School-based behavioral telehealth provides a unique opportunity to improve access to mental health care for children living in rural areas. Telehealth is increasingly being utilized to overcome rural-specific distance and resource barriers. Best practices for implementing telehealth in schools to improve access and reduce health disparities will be described.

## **4D**

### **Community Health: From Theory to Practice**

#### **Old Town AB**

*Paul Moore, D.Ph., Sr. Health Policy Advisor (retired), Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.*

*Brock Slabach, MPH, COO, National Rural Health Association*

Improving rural community health means addressing social determinants beyond healthcare facilities. Effective collaboration with local partners is vital for strategies that enhance overall well-being. This session will review trends in community-based care accountability, outline key areas for collaboration, and introduce an educational approach to prepare professionals for complex health challenges.

## **4E**

### **Future-Ready: How Educational Institutions are Powering the Workforce**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*Cassandra Pope, SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare, Program Manager*

*Kevin Bennett, PhD, SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare, Director*

*Courtney Catledge, DNP, University of South Carolina-Lancaster, Regional Palmetto College Dean*

Discover how colleges and universities such as the University of South Carolina-Lancaster foster programs that drive workforce development to meet evolving industry needs, highlighting strategies that expand access, boost economic mobility, and create career pathways, specifically for rural populations, ensuring that all communities are prepared for the future of work.

#### **4F**

##### **Mapping Rural Maternal and Neonatal Care: New Research Insights (FORHP)**

###### **Coronado A**

*Katy Kozhimannil, PhD, MPA, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Distinguished McKnight University Professor*

*Elizabeth Crane, Mission Analytics, Inc., Health Researcher*

*Kate Crothers, MPH, RN, MaineHealth, Grant Project Manager*

*Karis Tyner, DNP, HRSA/FORHP, Research Project Coordinator*

*Greta Stuhlsatz, PhD, HRSA/FORHP, Statistician*

Exploring rural maternal health at the intersection of program implementation and research. The panel will focus on recent findings around maternal and neonatal healthcare access in rural America and techniques to support and enhance data collection and improve program implementation.

#### **RHIS – Operations Track**

##### **Examining hospital and service line changes and finances**

###### **Coronado D**

*Casey Balio, PhD, East Tennessee State University Center for Rural Health and Research & ETSU/NORC Rural Health Research Center*

*Mark Holmes, PhD, University of North Carolina Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, Director*

*Brian Whitacre, PhD, Oklahoma State University, Professor and Neustadt Chair*

Rural hospitals face unique operational and financial challenges, which have implications for changes in service line offerings, vulnerability, and closure. This session will describe the current state and recent evidence on rural hospital and service line openings, closings, and finances, including spatial analyses and reflections from a rural hospital administrator.

#### **RHIS – APM / VBC**

## **Quality as a VBC Readiness Strategy**

### **Coronado E**

*Sarah Brinkman, Stratis Health, Senior Program Manager*

*Cody Utz, Holton Community Hospital, Quality Director*

Organizational capacity for quality improvement is a critical component for moving towards value-based care. Two rural hospitals that participated in the Rural Healthcare Provider Transition Project will share strategies and lessons learned through a focused initiative to increase capacity and infrastructure for quality across all aspects of their organizations.

## **4G**

### **Contributed Research Papers – Rural Workforce/Education**

#### **Coronado B**

- **Roadmap for Strengthening Rural Physician Workforce Through State GME**  
*Lori Rodefeld, University of North Carolina, Deputy Director*
- **Rural Road to Medicine: Inspiring Rural Texan Students**  
*Hannah Whittaker, Texas A&M University College of Medicine, Student*
- **Rethinking Rurality in Graduate Medical Education**  
*Emily M. Hawes, PharmD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Sheps Center for Health Services Research, Professor*
- **Producing rural physicians: 20 year strategies, outcomes, cost**  
*Mark Deutchman, MD, University of Colorado, Associate Dean for Rural Health*

**10:15 – 10:45 a.m.**

**Poster Session/Break**

**10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

## **5A**

### **Creative and Child-centered Conversations About Social Media**

#### **Balboa ABC**

*Cori Cross, MD, FAAP, Pediatrician*

*Dulce Reyes, student*

Join the American Academy of Pediatrics Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health to learn about the Center's child-centered framework for understanding youth social media use, conversation starters to engage youth, and how to connect with youth and families around social media and mental health.

## **Integrating Pediatric Obesity and Mental Health in Rural Care**

*Oyin Oloniniyi, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Program Manager, ECHO Initiatives*

*Erika Davis, PhD, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics, Manager, Program Evaluation*

*Erin Kelly, PhD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Director, Mental and Relational Health*

AAP will share implementation insights on pediatric ECHO programs that integrate obesity and mental health care in rural settings. This session highlights how AAP National Rural Adolescent and Child Health ECHO Training Center builds workforce capacity, supports trauma-informed care, and equips clinicians to deliver comprehensive, whole-child services in underserved communities.

## **5B**

### **Enhancing Team-Based Care & ACO Success through Medicare Wellness Visits**

#### **Gaslamp AB**

*Reyann Davis, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, Director, Value-Based Care*

*Paul Aslin, MHA, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals Clinically Integrated Network, Executive Director*

*Melissa Matlock, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals Clinically Integrated Network, Population Health and Quality Analyst*

*Cami Wade, RN, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, RN Clinical Care Coordinator*

*Krystal Stuart, MA, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, Care Coordinator Associate*

The Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH) Clinically Integrated Network and Texas A&M have partnered together providing care coordination as an extension of rural clinics workforce. This panel will explore tools to enhance care coordination, streamline workflows, and advance value-based care, focusing on lessons learned and future opportunities.

## **5C**

### **Reframing the Narrative: Strengths of Rural Communities**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*Catherine Smith, LPSW, The Healing Trust, Program Partner*

*Jacy Warrell, MPA, Rural Health Association of Tennessee, Chief Executive Officer*

Rural communities are often discussed through a lens of scarcity which overlooks the strengths rural communities possess – generational knowledge, cohesion, and streamlined decision-making. We'll explore an abundance mindset which creates effective, community-driven programming, and design initiatives that build on the inherent strengths of rural communities.

## 5D

### **Food Insecurity and Chronic Disease in the United States**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*Emma Boswell, MPH, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center*

*Peiyin Hung, PhD, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Co-Director of the University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina Department of Health Services Policy & Management*

*Elizabeth Crouch, PhD, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Co-Director of the University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina Department of Health Services Policy & Management*

*Gabriel Benavidez, MPH, PhD, Baylor University Department of Public Health, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology*

Food access is essential to health; yet, rural communities face persistent barriers. Limited chronic disease and food security data hinder actionable solutions. This session will discuss updated data on food access, food security, and strategies to identify high-need rural areas to guide targeted public health resource allocation.

### **Improving Chronic Disease Integrating CHWs and Central Kitchens**

*Deb Koester, PhD, DNP, Marshall Univ, Assistant Professor, Director of Community Health*

*Jamie Jeffrey, MD, FAAP, HealthyKids Wellness and Weight Management program and KEYS 4 HealthyKids, CAMC Weight Loss Center, Medical Director*

*Kim Tieman, MSW, ACSW, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Vice President and Program Director for Health*

Chronic disease outcomes are improved through integrated approaches addressing clinical and social determinants in rural communities. This strategy combines community health workers with a Central Kitchen model, using farm-to-table meals and principles. It presents clinical and strategic dimensions of using a Central Kitchen to address chronic disease.

## 5E

### **Rural Clinical Training: Trends, Challenges and Solutions**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*Holly Andrilla, MS, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Deputy Director & Research Scientist Principal*

*Randy Longenecker, MD, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center*

*Janessa Graves, PhD, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Director*

*Natalia Oster, PhD, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, Research Scientist*

Competition for rural clinical training sites has been identified as a barrier preventing NP and PA programs from providing rural training to their students. Medical schools and residencies also struggle to find preceptors and teaching sites. We will share findings on trends, barriers and solutions to sustain rural clinical training.

## **5F**

### **Rural 101: Applications and Implications of Defining Rural (FORHP)**

#### **Coronado A**

*Greta Stuhlsatz, PhD, HRSA/FORHP, Statistician*

*Karis Tyner, DNP, HRSA/FORHP, Research Project Coordinator*

*Arrianna Planey, PhD, MA, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Assistant Professor*

This session will provide and landscape of defining rural in the federal government and federally funded research. Representatives from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will discuss current rural definitions, rural research, and program eligibility determinations. Panelists will discuss research use cases, how to navigate determining

## **RHIS - Operations**

### **Real-World AI Strategies Driving Results in Rural Hospitals**

#### **Coronado D**

*Laurence Coman, Avo, COO & Co-founder*

*Athena Minor, PhD, DNP, MSN, RN, Ohio County HealthCare, Chief Nursing and Chief Clinical Officer*

This session will share affordable AI strategies—like ambient scribing—that cut post-visit documentation time by 17%, reduce chart review time by 87%, and improve medication dosing compliance by 35%, easing provider burden, driving better care, maximizing reimbursement.

## **RHIS - APM/VCM**

### **Alternative Payment Models and Value-Based Care: Making the Economics Work for Rural Hospitals**

#### **Coronado E**

*Anna Anna, Rural Health Redesign Center, Chief Administrative Officer*

## **5G**

## Contributed Research Papers

### Coronado B

- **Lung Cancer Screening Eligibility and Adherence by Rurality**  
*Brianna Holston, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, Research Assistant II*
- **Cervical Cancer Screening for Rural Women with Self-Collection**  
*Elizabeth VonderHaar, MD, Teal Medical*
- **National dialysis availability, quality, and ownership by rurality**  
*Casey P Balio, PhD, East Tennessee State University Center for Rural Health and Research, Research Assistant Professor*
- **Differential Rural-Urban NICU Access in North Carolina, 2009-2021**  
*Susie Gurzenda, NC Rural Health Research Program, Graduate Research Assistant*

**12:00 – 1:45 p.m.**

### Rural Health Awards Luncheon

#### Seaport D-H

Join NRHA for a tribute to the 2026 Rural Health Award winners.

**2:00-2:20 p.m.**

### CDC office of Rural Health Update

#### Seaport ABC

*Diane Hall, PhD, CDC-Office of Rural Health, Director*

This session will provide updates regarding key federal activities that help improve access to quality health care in rural communities.

**2:20 – 3:30 p.m.**

### Terry Reilly Lecture

#### Seaport ABC

*Sarah Jane Tribble, KFF Health News, Chief Rural Correspondent*

**3:15 – 3:30 p.m.**

### Poster Session/Break

**3:30 – 4:45 p.m.**

### Concurrent Sessions

**6A**

### A Snapshot of US Children's Health by Rurality

## **Balboa ABC**

*Cassie Odahowski, PhD, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Research Assistant Professor*

*Elizabeth Crouch, PhD, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Director and Associate Professor*

*Joni Nelson, PhD, James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine, Medical University of South Carolina, Associate Professor and Division Chief*

*Nicholas Yell, PhD, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Postdoctoral Research Associate*

*Emma Boswell MPH, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina*

*Taryn Farrell MPH, University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina*

Understanding factors impacting childhood health is essential to preventing negative health outcomes. This session will provide a snapshot of US children's health by rurality, examining 1) all-cause mortality and leading causes of death, 2) trends of physical, mental, and oral health outcomes, and 3) environmental factors impacting rural children.

## **6B**

### **Fighting Burnout with Bytes: Using Generative AI**

#### **Gaslamp AB**

*Sarah Morales, Google, Senior Program Manager*

*Bill Reid, Security Advisor*

*Madeline DuPlessis, Optura AI, Director of Enterprise Sales*

The rural workforce crisis is fueled by administrative overload. This session explores how generative Artificial Intelligence can drastically reduce documentation and paperwork. Learn how to deploy this innovative technology to improve clinician satisfaction and build a resilient, long-term workforce, keeping providers caring for their rural communities.

## **6C**

### **Wearables, Apps, and Virtual-Reality for Rural Veterans' Mental-Health**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*Hilary Touchett, PhD, RN, Michael E DeBakey VA Medical Center, Research Health Scientist*

*Julianna Hogan, PhD, Michael E DeBakey VA Medical Center, Clinical Psychologist*

*Kathleen Grubbs, PhD, Central Arkansas VA Healthcare System, Clinical Psychologist*

*Shannon Sisco, PhD, Michael E DeBakey VA Medical Center, Whole Health Clinical Director*

Panelists discuss innovations used to supplement care provided by rural VAs and how these programs can be implemented among other rural mental health programs. Topics include remotely delivered online peer support groups, wearables for sleep and stress, virtual reality home-based pain treatment, and virtual reality for mindfulness and relaxation.

### **Strategies for Implementing Telehealth Programs across Care Contexts**

*Jennifer Freytag, PhD, Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Science Specialist*

*Stephanie Day, PhD, Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Services Researcher*

*Giselle Day, PhD, Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Science Specialist*

*Hilary Touchett, PhD, Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Services Researcher*

Implementing telehealth programs presents unique challenges for every rural clinic. This panel will present successful implementation strategies applied at Veterans Administration (VA) rural mental health clinics. Panelists will use examples to initiate an audience-led conversation on tailoring strategies to meet needs of provider and patient populations within and outside VA.

## **6D**

### **Sustaining Obstetrical Regionalized Levels of Care: What Will It Take?**

#### **Old Town AB**

*Karen Weis, RNC, University of Kansas Medical Center, Professor/Christine A. Hartley Rural Nursing Professorship*

*David Jordan, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, President & CEO of United Methodist Health Ministry Fund*

Across the U.S., there are growing maternity care deserts. Predominantly rural states struggle to maintain regionalized models of care. Access to inpatient and outpatient maternal care for 105 Kansas counties were assessed. A panel will discuss the impact of hospital closures and approaches for sustaining regionalized levels of care.

### **State-led Innovations to improve rural maternal health**

*Whitney Wiggins, Health Resource and Service Administration, Public Health Analyst*

HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau, State Maternal Health Innovation program's purpose is to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity. This session shows the impact of State led Maternal Health Task Force innovative programs addressing skilled workforce, direct clinical care, enhanced data quality, and community engagement in rural areas.

**6E**

**Bridging Gaps: Community Health Workers Transform Rural Health**

**La Jolla AB**

*Michaela Amburgey, MPH, UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health, Rural Project Manager*

*William Baker, BA, RN, UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health, Director*

This presentation explores the critical role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in rural healthcare teams, highlighting the long-standing Kentucky Homeplace CHW program as a proven, cost-effective model. Utilizing program data and published research, we demonstrate how CHWs improve chronic disease outcomes, reduce healthcare usage, and bridge social and healthcare gaps.

**Growing Community Health Workforce: Networks Make the Difference!**

*Andy Lowe, New England Rural Health Association, Executive Director*

*Aisling Ryan-Abbott, DNP, FNP-C, New England Rural Health Association, Clinical Education and Workforce Consultant*

*Kiara Badillo, New England Rural Health Association, Public Health & Education Consultant*

Learn how an innovative program trained over 150 community health workers in rural counties across Massachusetts. A collaborative network of AHECs, community colleges, health centers, and community partners reaches into immigrant communities to recruit and train people to start them on the path to careers in the rural healthcare workforce.

**6F**

**Networks That Work: Scaling Rural Solutions Through Collaboration (FORHP)**

**Coronado A**

*Karis Tyner, DNP, FORHP, HRSA, Research Coordinator*

*George H. Pink, PhD, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Professor Emeritus*

*Paul Aslin, MHA, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals Clinically Integrated Network, Executive Director*

This panel examines rural health networks as a policy and operational strategy for rural providers. Researchers from the University of North Carolina will provide the landscape by sharing their findings comparing independent and system-affiliated rural hospitals. A FORHP representative will discuss the impact and future of our network programs, while a clinically integrated network leader will share best practices from the perspective of an established network.

## **RHIS - Operations**

### **When Patients Leave: How CAHs Respond to Outmigration**

#### **Coronado D**

*Sally Buck, MS, FACHE, National Rural Health Resource Center, Chief Executive Officer*

*Jonathan Hatfield, Klickitat Valley Health, Chief Executive Officer*

*Matthew Bancroft, MPH, National Rural Health Resource Center, Business Development Specialist*

Rural hospital leaders share real-world strategies to address outmigration, improve service alignment, and recapture market share. Presenters will highlight tools, data, and lessons learned to help Critical Access Hospitals strengthen financial stability and meet local health needs. Session includes practical examples, planning resources, and current trends in patient migration.

## **RHIS - APM/VCM**

### **Operational and Regulatory Impacts of the OBBB and more.**

#### **Coronado E**

*Brian Bertsch, Eide Bailly, Principal*

*Jared Heim, Eide Bailly, Strategic Financing Director*

The OBBB and other regulatory updates continue to change the operational landscape for healthcare providers. This session will discuss the major changes and the impact to providers. It will also include a discussion of how we see facilities reacting, strategies to consider, discussion points for Congressional leaders, and more.

## **6G**

### **Contributed Research Papers - Geographical Analyses**

#### **Coronado B**

- 1. Geographic Disparities in Long-Term Care for Aging Populations**  
*Yvonne Jonk, PhD, Maine Rural Health Research Center, Director, University of Southern Maine, Research Professor*
- 2. System-level Effects of Collaborative Health Communities**  
*Audrey Price, MPH, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University, Research Associate*
- 3. Geographic Variation in Health Care Spending Across Rurality**  
*Janessa Graves PhD, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington, Director, Associate Professor*
- 4. Community Perspectives on Aging Across Tennessee**  
*Kayla Alvis, PhD, East Tennessee State University, Research Assistant Professor*

**Friday, May 22, 2026**

**7:15-8:30 a.m.**

**Breakfast/Interest Group Meetings**

**Seaport Foyer**

**7:15-8 a.m.**

**Special Interest Group Breakfasts**

**Seaport ABC**

Rural Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorder

Rural Indigenous Peoples Health

Rural Veterans Health

Rural Medical Education

**8:00-9:30 a.m.**

**Washington Update**

**Seaport ABC**

*Carrie Cochran-McClain, National Rural Health Association, Chief Policy Officer*

Join rural health's top federal lobbyist for an insider's update about what's going on in Washington and what to expect in the next year.

**9:30 – 9:45 a.m.**

**Break**

**9:45 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**7A**

**MMIW: Addressing Ongoing Disparities and Injustice Today**

**Balboa ABC**

*Mary-Katherine McNatt, DrPH, MPH, A.T. Still University, Professor*

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

*Janice C. Probst, PhD, University of South Carolina, Distinguished Professor Emerita*

This session addresses the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), highlighting the disproportionate violence they face. MMIW reflects systemic injustices including inadequate law enforcement, media neglect, and insufficient resources, and exacerbates intergenerational trauma. The session will also explore potential solutions to combat these ongoing issues.

## **7B**

### **Expanding Access: Integrating Specialty Services into Rural Health Clinics**

#### **Gaslamp AB**

*Ellen Garlick, Forvis Mazars, Senior Manager*

This presentation will focus on integrating specialists into Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). We will also cover opportunities for new multi-specialty RHCs. We will discuss regulatory changes, opportunities for RHCs, and considerations for adding specialists to improve healthcare services and reimbursement.

### **Driving Hospital Sustainability through RHCs**

*Gregory Wolf, Wintergreen, Principal*

With the passing of the OBBB, hospitals now more than ever must identify and leverage revenue-generating opportunities to secure operations. This presentation will focus on specific strategies hospitals, particularly CAHs, can use to drive and sustain vital services within rural markets.

## **7C**

### **Impacts of Transportation Access on Hawai'i's Rural Health**

#### **Gaslamp CD**

*John Desfor, MPH, University of Hawaii Rural Health Research and Policy Center, Policy and Data Analyst*

Through interviews with 40 community stakeholders, the University of Hawaii Rural Health Research and Policy Center found that lack of access to transportation in rural Hawai'i significantly impacts healthcare access and utilization. Policy options to address challenges were co-designed with the community for consideration by policymakers.

## **7D**

### **The Rural Route to Student Mental Health**

#### **Old Town AB**

*Gavin O'Neil, LCSW, Memorial Medical Clinics, Licensed Clinical Social Worker*

This session highlights how a Rural Health Clinic-led Mobile Behavioral Health Unit partnered with seven rural schools to expand access for youth. Presenters will share strategies to overcome workforce shortages, billing barriers, and stigma while delivering psychiatric and counseling services directly to underserved students in their daily school environment.

### **Integrated Comprehensive Care Collective for Rural Health**

*Jennifer Hammons, PharmD, DrPH, The Health Wagon, St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy, Director of Pharmacy Services and Public Health Initiatives*

*Paula Hill-Collins, DNP, FNP-BC, PCNP, The Health Wagon, Vice-President/Chief Clinical Director*  
*Teresa Tyson, DNP, MSN, FNP-BC, FA, The Health Wagon, President/ CEO*

Discover how the Integrated Comprehensive Care Collective model unites medical, dental, vision, mental health, pharmacy, and veterinary care to transform rural health. Learn how mobile units, telehealth, and community partnerships break barriers, improve chronic disease management, and strengthen public health by addressing the unique needs of underserved populations.

## **7E**

### **New Partners Pilot Project – Advancing Rural Adult Immunization with Partnerships and Trusted Messengers**

#### **La Jolla AB**

*Charleigh Granada, CDC, Public Health Analyst*

*Diana Dedmon, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, AFN-C, University of Tennessee, Associate Professor and Director of Clinical Affairs*

*Beth O'Connor, M.Ed., Virginia Rural Health Association, Executive Director*

*Grant Anderson, University of Minnesota, Assistant Professor*

## **7G**

### **Contributed Research Papers – Rural Hospitals**

#### **Coronado B**

- **The Financial Impact of Medicare Advantage on Rural Hospitals**  
*Braden Fineberg, Vector Health AI, Co-founder and CTO*
- **The Early Experience of Rural Emergency Hospitals**  
*Aditya Pillutla, UNC Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, Research Assistant*
- **Rural, Poorer Populations and Adverse Medicare Payment Adjustments**  
*Mary Smith, PhD, Mississippi State University, Assistant Professor*

- **Rural Emergency Hospitals and Telehealth: Mixed-Methods Analysis**  
*Jillian Harvey, PhD, Medical University of South Carolina, Professor*

**11:00 a.m.**

**Conference Adjourns**

### **2026 Accepted Poster List**

#### **Mortality Risks Associated with Living in Ambulance Deserts**

*Yvonne Jonk, PhD, Research Professor, University of Southern Maine*

*Heidi O'Connor, MS, Sr Data Analyst, University of Southern Maine*

#### **Farmers cultivating resourcefulness: A qualitative study**

*Jeanne Ward, PhD, RN, MPA, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Indiana University*

*Melissa Perkins, Research Project Specialist, University of Southern California*

*John Blossnich, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor, University of Southern California*

#### **Tele-Collaborative Outreach to Rural Patients with Chronic Pain**

*Travis Lovejoy, PhD, MPH, Clinical Director, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, VHA Office of Rural Health, Portland, OR*

*Natassja Pal, BS, Program Manager, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR*

*Sarah Ono, PhD, Operations Director, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, VHA Office of Rural Health, Portland, OR*

*Una Makris, MD, Chief of Rheumatology, VA San Diego Health Care System, San Diego, CA*

*Amanda Mixon, MD, MPH, Associate Professor, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, TN*

*Erin Krebs, MD, MPH, Core Investigator, Center for Care Delivery and Outcomes Research, VA Minneapolis Health Care System, Minneapolis, MN*

*Steven Dobscha, MD, Director, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR*

*Melinda Davis, PhD, Director, Oregon Rural Practice-Based Research Network, Portland, OR*

*Benjamin Morasco, PhD, Core Investigator, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR*

#### **Identifying Gaps in Rural Farm Community-Based Healthcare**

*Olivia Passe, BS, Wake Forest School of Medicine*

*Dawn Caviness, MD, BSN, Associate Professor of Family Medicine Cabarrus Family Medicine Residency Program, Wake Forest School of Medicine*

#### **Tele-Collaborative Care for Rural Veterans with Chronic Pain**

*1/ Sarah S. Ono, PhD, Core Investigator/Co-Director, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Portland, VHA Office of Rural Health; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA*

*Portland Health Care System; Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Oregon Health & Science University 2/ Natassja Pal, BS, Research Project Manager, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System; Oregon Health & Science University 3/ Diana J. Govier, PhD, MPH, Core Investigator, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Portland, VHA Office of Rural Health; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System 4/ Benjamin J. Morasco, PhD, Core Investigator, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System; Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Oregon Health & Science University 5/ Travis I. Lovejoy, PhD, MPH, Core Investigator/Co-Director, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Portland, VHA Office of Rural Health; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System; Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Oregon Health & Science University*

### **Bridging the Rural Digital Health Divide**

*Jasrina Kaushal, BS, Medical Student, American Medical Student Association*

*Sohawm Sengupta, BS, Medical Student, American Medical Student Association*

### **Rural-Urban Differences among Older Adults: Evidence From 2019-2023**

*Oluyomi Oloruntoba, DrPH, BDS, MPH, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Southwest Rural Research Center, School of Public Health, Texas A&M University*

*Marvellous Akinlotan, BDS, PhD, Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Health Services Research, Department of Pediatric Dentistry, College of Dentistry, Texas A&M University*

*Hye Jin Park, PhD, MPH, Research Associate, School of Dentistry Office of Research, University of Utah*

*Caleb Ochimana, MPH, PhD Student, Department of Health Policy and Management, Texas A&M University*

*Nima Khodakarami, PhD, MSc, MBA, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Administration, Pennsylvania State University*

*Gogool Falia, MBBS, MBA, PhD Candidate, Department of Health Policy and Management, Texas A&M University*

*Alva O. Ferdinand, JD, DrPH, Director, Southwest Rural Health Research Center, School of Public Health, Texas A&M University*

### **Rural-Urban Differences in Health Provider Physical Activity Advising**

*Brianna Holston, B.S., Research Assistant II, University of Southern Maine*

*Erika Ziller, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Vermont*

### **Medicaid Mental and Behavioral Health Hospitalizations Following ARPA**

*Gogool Falia, PhD(c), MBBS, MBA, CPH, Doctoral Candidate, Southwest Rural Health Research Center, Texas A&M University*

### **Distribution of Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants**

*Aakriti Shrestha, PhD, MPH*

*Hye Jin Park, PhD, MPH, RN*

*Emesomhi Eboreime, MPH*

*Caleb Ochinana, B.Pharm, MPH, MBA*  
*Oluyomi Oloruntoba, DrPH, BDS, MPH*  
*Alva O. Ferdinand, DrPH, JD*

### **Structural Language Barriers in Rural Veteran Virtual Care**

*Victoria Ngo, PhD, Advanced Fellow in Geriatrics, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Da Jung Chang, PhD, Advanced Fellow in Geriatrics, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Ryan Holliday, PhD, Clinical Research Psychologist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Shiloh Jordan, PhD, Director of Training for Psychology, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Lindsey Monteith, PhD, Clinical Research Psychologist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Nainwant Singh, MD, Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Emma Quach, PhD, Research Health Scientist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Stephanie L. Shimada, PhD, Research Health Scientist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Mark Zocchi, PhD, Health Science Specialist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Shibei Zhao, MPH, Statistician, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Pengsheng Ni, MD, Research Associate Professor, Boston University*  
*Linda Am, MPH, Health Science Specialist, Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Camilla B. Pimentel, PhD, Research Health Scientist, Department of Veterans Affairs*

### **Rural Dementia Healthcare: Military Service, Mental Health, Comorbidity**

*Traben Pleasant, PhD, Qualitative Analyst, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon; Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon*  
*Brooke Jespersen, PhD, Post-Doctoral Fellow, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*  
*Rachel Wall, MS, Health Services Researcher, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon; Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon*  
*Elizabeth Hulen, PhD, Health Science Specialist, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*  
*Allison O'Neill, MPH, Data Analyst, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*  
*Loretta Shields, PhD, D.Min, Bio-Statistician, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*  
*Diana J. Govier, PhD, MPH, Core Investigator, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon; Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon*

*Ayushi Gulati, MPH, Center Coordinator, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon*

*Travis I. Lovejoy, PhD, MPH, Clinical Director, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*

*Sarah S. Ono, PhD, Operations Director, VHA Office of Rural Health - Veterans Rural Health Resource Center, Portland, Oregon; Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon*

### **Counselors Assisting Veterans to Engage in Services (CAVES)**

*Angie Waliski, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, Research Scientist, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences*

*Monica Matthieu, PhD, LCSW, CAVHS, VA, Saint Louis University, School of Social Work*

*Laura Watlington, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Program, CAVHS, VA*

*Michael Jaques, CAVHS, VA*

*Leonard Burgest, CAVHS, VA*

### **Rural Provider and Community Perspectives on Tennessee Health**

*Tyra Girdwood, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)*

*Satya Surbhi, PhD, Associate Professor, UTHSC*

*Avinash Pakker, Data Analyst, UTHSC*

*Matt Harris, PhD, Professor, UT Knoxville*

*Sultan Mahmud, PhD, Data Engineer, UTHSC*

*Jim Bailey, MD, Professor, UTHSC*

*Wendy Likes, PhD, DNSc, APRN, Dean, UTHSC*

### **Interventionalists' Experiences Remotely Addressing Cancer Pain**

*Sarah A. Minter, PhD, Assistant Professor of Health Services Research, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN*

*Andrea L. Cheville, MD, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN*

### **Navigating Rehabilitation Referrals for Rural Veterans**

*Mi Jung Lee, PhD, Assistant Professor, VRHRC-GNV and University of Florida*

*Consuelo Kreider, PhD, Associate Professor, VRHRC-GNV and University of Florida*

*Jaewon Kang, PhD, Assistant Professor, VRHRC-GNV and Colorado State University*

*Amber Armstead, PhD, Associate Professor, VRHRC-GNV and Medical University of South Carolina*

*Kimberly Findley, RN, VRHRC-GNV*

*Keith Myers, DPT, Director, VRHRC-GNV*

### **Longitudinal Workforce Outcomes of a Rural-Focused Medical School Preadmissions Pathway**

*Jana Lee, MS, Rural Scholars Program Director, University of Missouri School of Medicine  
Whitney LeFevre, MD, Assistant Dean for Rural Health, University of Missouri School of Medicine*

### **Rural Community Health Workers' Early Language Education Videos**

*Caitlin Raaz, PhD, CCC-SLP, Associate Professor, University of Northern Colorado*

### **Rooted in Rural Care: Expanding Alabama's Health Workforce**

*Meghan Rivera, EdD, MPH, MHA, Assistant Director of Rural Programs, The University of Alabama*

*Antonio Gardner, PhD, MS, MCHES, Director of Education and Evaluation for Rural Programs, The University of Alabama*

*Drake Lavender, MD, Director of Rural Programs, The University of Alabama*

*James Leeper, PhD, Professor Emeritus, The University of Alabama*

*Jackie Luker, MD, Associate Director of Rural Programs, The University of Alabama*

*Candace Lacey, MS, Rural Programs Coordinator, The University of Alabama*

*Cynthia Moore, BS, Rural Programs Coordinator, The University of Alabama*

### **Preferred Physician Recruitment Incentives in Rural VA Facilities**

*Shannon Kenyon, PhD, Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center*

*Aisha Khan, PhD, Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center*

*Patrick O'Mahen, PhD, Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center*

*Vivian Ramont, MPH, Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center*

*Sylvia Hysong, PhD, Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center*

### **Missouri Rural Drowning Risk Analysis for 2020-2025 – For Poster Session**

*Nima Lal, MPH, Student, Missouri State University*

*Molly Lancaster, PhD MCHES, Assistant Professor, Missouri State University*

### **Geospatial Analysis of Rural Geriatric Care Gaps**

*Sara Elgayar, MS, Birmingham VA Medical System, Birmingham, AL*

*Catherine Dawson, MD, New England Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), Bedford VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts; University Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

*Eileen Dryden, PhD, Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research(CHOIR), Bedford VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts, USA, Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, UMass Chan Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

*William Hung, MD, Bronx Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York, USA, Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine, New York City, New York, USA*

*Lauren Moo, MD, New England Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), Bedford VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts, USA, Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR), Bedford VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts, USA, Department of Neurology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

*Margaret Ding, MS, Bronx Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York, USA*

*Emily Franzosa, DrPH, Bronx Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York, USA, Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine, New York City, New York, USA*

### **Five Years of STRETCH-OB Residency Track**

*Tsai Ling Liao, MD, Associate Director Family Medicine Residency Program*

*Emily Orr, MA, Research Associate, Department of Family and Community Medicine*

*Manorama Khare, PhD, MS, Research Professor, Director Division of Health Research and Evaluation*

*Joseph Garry, MD, FAAFP, FACSM, Professor and Head, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford*

*Beth Schleicher, MD, Director, STRETCH-OB Advanced Obstetrics Family Medicine Residency Track, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford*

*Rhonda Verzal, MD, Director Family Medicine Residency Program, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford*

### **County-Level Variation in Distance to Pharmacy Services Among Tennessee Medicaid Enrollees**

*Satya Surbhi, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC), Memphis*

*Aravind Dhanabal, MS, Data Analyst, UTHSC; Tyra Girdwood, PhD, RN, UTHSC*

*Md Sultan Mahmood, PhD, UTHSC*

*Matt Harris, PhD, UT Knoxville; James E. Bailey, MD, MPH, UTHSC*

*Wendy Likes, PhD, UTHSC*

### **Rural-Urban Differences in Colorectal Cancer Screening among US Adults by Eligibility Status**

*Sarah Nowak, PhD, Larner College at the University of Vermont*

*Emily Hallgren, PhD, Larner College at the University of Vermont*

*Brianna Holston, University of Southern Maine*

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### **Georgia Apex: Sustainable Mental Health for Rural Schools**

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### **Telehealth experiences among AI/AN Veterans: A qualitative evaluation**

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### **Rural–Urban Differences in Medicare Inpatient Discharges for Behavioral Health Conditions, 2019-2023**

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### **Provider-to-Provider Telehealth Use for Rural Obstetric Practitioners: Scoping Review**

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### **Policy Variation in Medicaid Children's Dental Coverage - For Poster Session**

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### **Healthcare Access: Rural Veterans with Serious Mental Illness**

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### **Housing Insecurity Among Rural Veterans: a Cross-Sectional Analysis**

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### **Rural-Urban Disparities in Hospitalization and Emergency Department Visits Among Adults with Mental Health Challenges in the United States**

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### **Pharmacist-Initiated Hormonal Contraception in North Carolina**

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### **National trends in rural Veterans' receipt of contraception**

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### **Rural Pharmacy Practice: Drivers, Barriers, and Educational Influences**

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### **Rural Veterans and Perceived Quality of VA-Purchased Care**

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### **Rural Readiness of Behavioral Health Training Programs**

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### **Community Care Service Referrals for Older Rural Veterans**

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### **Accelerating Impact: Updated Rural HPV Cancer Prevention Priorities**

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### **Tackling the "Tyranny of Distance" through Tele-Geriatrics Services**

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### **Patterns of Veteran Suicidal Self-Directed Violence in Oregon– For Poster Session**

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### **Geographic variation in breast cancer screening among rural- compared to urban-residing women Veterans**

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### **Growing and Connecting: Rural Oregon Veteran Suicide Prevention**

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### **Unequal Prescriptions: Assessing Disparities in Medication Use in Rural Communities**

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### **Opioid misuse and remediation in rural North Carolina**

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### **Rural-urban adult mental health across birth cohorts**

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### **Rural colorectal cancer incidence rates by state**

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**'Bridge over Troubled Waters': Strengthening Rural Healthcare through Community**

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**Rural Emergency Hospitals and Telehealth: Perspectives and Analysis**

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**Bringing Geriatric Care Evaluation to Rural Areas: The GRECC Connect Project**

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**Development of Veteran Health on Native Lands Dashboard**

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**Missed Skin Cancer Diagnoses in Rural Primary Care**

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### **“A Disjointed System”: Rural Older Veteran Care Coordination**

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### **An Analysis of the Rural Health Experience: An Innovative Healthcare Pathway Program**

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### **Beyond the Ivory Tower: Expanding Rural Specialty Expertise**

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### **Strengthening Rural Healthcare through Sensory-Aware Autism Training**

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### **Urban-Rural Cardiovascular Risk in Three Southern States**

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### **Expanding Access to Clinical Trials in Rural America**

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### **Continued Declines Across States in Hospital-Based Obstetric Services**

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### **Nursing Home Staffing in the Rural and Urban U.S.**

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### **Preventing Unintentional Firearm Injuries: Veteran Perspectives**

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### **Mental Health Campaign Impact on Rural California Adolescents**

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### **Measuring Obstetric Care Access with Different 'Rural' Definitions**

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### **Rural Areas Trail Behind in Medicaid's Shift Toward Home- and Community-based Services**

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### **Enhancing Stroke Systems of Care in Rural Alaska**

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### **Rural-Urban Differences in FEMA National Risk Index Scores**

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### **Rural Hospital AI Use and Evaluation**

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### **Smoking Continuation After a COPD Diagnosis in Appalachia**

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### **Poverty Simulation for Interprofessional Rural Health Education**

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### **Global Rural Workforce Development Through Family Medicine Training**

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### **Patient Portal Enrollment in a Rural Health Center**

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### **Overcoming the Top Barriers to Rural CHW Reimbursement**

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### **Built for the Backroads: Postgraduate Outcomes of RVUCOM's Rural & Wilderness Medicine Track**

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### **Firearm Injury Prevention with Rural Veterans: Multi-stakeholder evaluation**

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### **Successfully Recruiting Rural Patients in Clinical Research**

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### **An Analysis of Rural Workforce Recruitment Challenges**

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### **Integrating Digital Mental Health into Rural Primary Care**

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### **Proficiency in Special Veteran Populations in Rural Health: Considerations for Primary Care**

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### **Impact of Virtual Nursing on Care Delivery in Rural Hospitals**

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### **Pathway to Increase the Healthcare Workforce in Underserved Areas**

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### **Veteran Perceptions of Low-Earth Orbit Satellite Internet**

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### **The Power of Partnerships in Sustaining Behavioral Healthcare Access Programs: Lessons Learned from Technical Assistance Activities**

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### **Physician Shadowing in Rural Health Immersion Program**

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### **Compliance Evaluation of Autonomous Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Licensure Requirements in Florida**

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### **U.S. Rural and Non-Rural Kidney Transplant Patients: Role of Telemedicine**

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### **Trends in specialty consultations for diabetic foot ulcer**

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### **Community Partnerships in Rural Health Immersion Program**

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### **Shaping Future Nurses Through Rural Clinical Immersion**

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### **Outcomes of a Rural Hospital Tele-Hospitalist Model**

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### **Rural-Urban Veteran Differences in Dementia Specialty Care Utilization**

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### **Medical Student Knowledge Gaps in Rural Medicine**

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### **Expanding Rural Access Through Satellite-Enabled Mobile Telehealth: A Nurse-Practitioner-Led Model Using Starlink and TytoCare in Central Appalachia**

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**Strengthening Rural Healthcare Delivery Through Administrative Support Education**

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**Responding to Extremely High Rates of Perinatal Depression in Rural Maine: Innovative Ways to Address the Crisis**

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**Strengthening Rural VA Teams Through the AIM-HI Initiative**

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**Scoping Review of Telehealth Interventions for Mental Health in Rural Communities**

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**Bullying and Early Initiation, KY MS YBRs 2023**

*Dr. Elizabeth Jones, Professor, Western Kentucky University*

**Recruitment and Retention of Minnesota Rural Health Professionals**

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**Chronic Kidney Disease Knowledge Among Rural Ugandan Diabetics**

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**Underrepresentation of Rural Populations in Cancer-related Clinical Trials**

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**Development of Sustainable Training for Rural Native Veteran Health Care Navigators**

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***Training rural, primary care clinics on medical procedures***

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