



National Rural Health Association

Rural Medical Education Conference

May 19, 2026 – San Diego, CA

Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego

“Transforming Training: What’s Coming down the Track?”

8 - 8:15 a.m.

Welcome

Alan Morgan, NRHA, CEO

8:15 - 9:15 a.m.

Lessons learned from establishing an Accelerated Medical Pathway Program

Lisa Dodson, MD, MCW Central Wisconsin, Founding Dean Emeritus, Professor of Family and Community Medicine

This presentation explores the development, implementation, and outcomes of accelerated medical training tracks designed to address workforce needs, reduce student debt and reduce time to independent practice. We will highlight key design principles, institutional considerations, and learner outcomes, with examples from existing programs. Attendees will gain practical insights into the benefits, challenges, and future directions of accelerated pathways in medical education.

9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

Accelerated Medical Pathways – A Program’s Perspective

Jonathan Cartsonis, MD, University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix, Director, Rural Health Professions Program

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

Hear from both undergraduate and graduate medical programs currently considering or undergoing the establishment of an accelerated medical track. We will discuss the admissions, curriculum, financial, and regulatory challenges associated with the design of an accelerated medical pathway program.

10:15 - 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

NRHA Government Affairs Update

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

Hear an update on the current legislative and regulatory issues affecting rural health workforce and medical training programs, including, the rollout of the Rural Health Transformation Funds, the changes to the Federal student loan program, and the US visa program.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

2026 Tour of Rural Medical Education

RME students, staff and/or faculty will discuss innovations in their rural medical education programs.

2:45-3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Student Presentation

4:15-4:45 p.m.

RME Business Meeting

Nominations for the 2026-2027 RME executive committee will open. Discussion of future meetings and activities. All are welcome to attend.

4:45-5 p.m.

Closing Remarks

**Thank you for your attendance and your continued support of NRHA and the RME Conference!
Join us next year in New Orleans, LA on May 18, 2027!**