



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

**Monday, May 6**

**1 – 1:15 p.m.**

**Conference Welcome**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

*Alan Morgan, MPA, NRHA CEO*

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

**1:15 – 2:30 p.m.**

**Opening Plenary**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

**Promoting Equitable Healthcare Delivery in Rural Communities**

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

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

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

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

**2:30 – 2:45 p.m.**

**Networking Break, Poster Session**

**2:45 – 4 p.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**1A. CDC Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction Rural Efforts**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **1B. Addressing Rural Dementia Disparities in Minnesota with CBPR**

### **Grand Ballroom AB (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Grand Ballroom DE (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

*Itai Jeffries, PhD, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Program Director, Paths (Re)Membered Project*  
*Jack Bruno, MSW, Transhealth*

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

## **Improving Primary Care for LGBTQIA+ and Neurodivergent Youth**

*Anthony DiMartino, MA, The Weitzman Institute, Education Program Specialist*

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

*Joel Ramirez, MD, Camarena Health, Chief Medical Officer*

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

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

**4 – 4:15 p.m.**

**Networking Break, Poster Session**

**4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

**Concurrent Session**

## **2A. Critical Access Hospital Engagement with Social Needs Data**

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

### **Grand Ballroom A (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

## **Social Drivers of Health in Value-Based Care**

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

*Jeannie Davis, EdD, Division of Community Health, Western University of Health Sciences*

*Jim Whelan, MD, Medical Director Munson Clinically Integrated Network and Northern Michigan Care Partners*

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

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

### **Grand Ballroom AB (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

*Sarah O'Donnell, MPH, Team Lead, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy*

*Mike Shimmens, CPRP, Executive Director, 3RNET*

*Sarah Lifsey, MPP, PMP, Senior Project Manager, RCORP-Evaluation/CVP*

*Jeanine Hanna, PhD, Deputy Project Director, RCORP-Evaluation/Abt Global- TBD*

*John Barnas, Executive Director, Michigan Center for Rural Health*

This session will highlight health equity accomplishments and lessons learned from the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program, which is honoring five years of supporting rural communities in fighting the opioid crisis. This session will also discuss opportunities for stakeholder engagement in RCORP and the future of health equity in the program.

## **2C. Climate Change's Impact on Border Region One Health**

### **Grand Ballroom DE (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

*David Line, PhD, MPH, MSW, Northwestern University, Program Director*

*Carrie Shaver DHA, IHC, FACHE, Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Department of Health Management and Leadership*

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

**Tuesday, May 7**

**7 – 8 a.m.**

**Continental Breakfast**

**Poster Session**

**8:00 – 9:15 a.m.**

**Opening Plenary**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

### **Medical Debt: Implications for Rural Health Equity**

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

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

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

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

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

**9:15 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Networking Break, Poster Session**

**9:30 – 10:45 a.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions**

## **3A. Trauma-informed care: Moving from Buzzword to Practice**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

#### **Grand Ballroom AB (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

*Ginnie Lin, Public Health Analyst, HRSA*

*Mariana Vasquez, Systems Navigation Program Manager, Sonoran Prevention Works*

*Alexandra Boneo, Programs Manager, Amistades, Inc.*

*Ryann Elena Quick, Santa Cruz County Overcoming Substance Addiction (SOSA) Consortium Representative, Mariposa Community Health Clinic*

In this session, explore strategies in delivering behavioral health services in Arizona-Mexico border communities. HRSA hosts a panel of Rural Community Opioid Response Program recipients to share diverse approaches on addressing healthcare, cultural diversity, and geographical hurdles. Gain actionable insights and foster a deeper understanding of this unique rural landscape.

### **3C. U.S. Policies Threaten Native American Access to Water**

#### **Grand Ballroom DE (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

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

**10:45 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Networking Break, Poster Session**

**11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**Concurrent Session**

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

#### **Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

*Mark Holmes, PhD, Cecil G Sheps Center for Health Services Research, Director*

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

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

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

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

#### **4B. Supporting Rural Victims of Intimate Partner Violence**

##### **Grand Ballroom AB (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

##### **Violence during pregnancy: racial/ethnic differences among rural residents**

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

Perinatal intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common and preventable contributor to maternal morbidity and mortality. This session will describe differences in experiences of physical IPV and postpartum abuse screening among rural residents who gave birth, with attention to differences in these outcomes at the intersections of rurality and race/ethnicity.

##### **Silence surrounding intimate partner violence in rural communities**

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

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

#### **4C. Healthcare Access for Migrant Workers in Rural Missouri**

##### **Grand Ballroom DE (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

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

##### **Bridging the gap between clinical-practices and community health**

*Eisha Khan, MPH, MaineHealth, Program Manager*

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

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

**12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**Networking Lunch**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

**1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Plenary Presentation**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

##### **Increasing Diversity in Kansas and Missouri Healthcare Workforce**

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

*Kael Martin, Health Forward Foundation,  
Lisse Regehr, BA, Thrive Kansas and Thrive Allen County, President and CEO*

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

**2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

**Networking Break, Poster Session**

**2:45 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Concurrent Session**

**5A. Pharmacists: Filling the Gaps in Rural Healthcare**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

**A Shot at Equity: Overcoming Racial Health Inequities**

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

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

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

**Grand Ballroom AB (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

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

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

**Kuleana Health: Health Literacy on Hawaii Island**

*Randy Kurohara, BA, Community First Hawaii, Executive Director*

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

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

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

**Grand Ballroom DE (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

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

*Susan Kunz, MPH, Susan Kunz Consulting, Public health*

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

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

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

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

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

Federally-qualified health center Island Health Care, seeks to bridge care gaps and boost health equity by utilizing digitally-enabled community health workers (CHWs) to provide care outside of traditional facilities. Island and Dimagi will provide replicable insights into how care-coordination tools enable CHWs to improve care delivery for rural, underserved patients.

**4:00 – 5:15 p.m.**

**Plenary Presentation**

**Grand Ballroom C (5<sup>th</sup> floor)**

**Lessons learned through development of rural clinical-community linkages**

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

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

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

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

**5:15 p.m.**

**Conference Adjourns**

**Thank you for your attendance and your continued support of NRHA and the Health Equity Conference! Join us next year in Atlanta, GA on May 19-20, 2025.**

**2024 Health Equity Conference Accepted Poster Sessions**

- Communications to Improve Rural Youth Health- Brunswick, GA  
Llewellyn Cornelius, Ph.D
- Addressing Unmet Social Needs of People Living with Epilepsy in Rural Communities  
Thometta Cozart, MPH, MS, MCHES, CPH
- MN RIDE Study for Rural Adults with SCD  
Dereck Salisbury, Ph.D
- Underserved and Rural Scholars Program: Preparing Rural Leaders  
Emily Eddy, PharmD
- C-Sections: Exception or the Norm in Rural Arkansas?  
Craig Wilson, JD, MPA
- Immunizations among Medicare Beneficiaries: Rural vs. Urban  
Chelsea Munoz

- Advancing Health Equity with Native Hawaiians  
Chelsea Munoz
- Hair Equity: Addressing Systemic Racism at its Roots  
Vanessa Rose
- Seeking Transformational Change-Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)  
Kaley Petersen, MS/ OTR
- Mental Health Resource Gaps in Rural Schools  
Kaley Petersen, MS/OTR
- Addressing COPD in Rural America  
Nicole Goldsboro, BS
- Capacity Building from Rural Perspectives: Addressing Tobacco Disparities  
Natalie Murdock, MPH
- Stress, Cardiovascular Health, and Rural African American Women  
Amnazo Muhirwa, Ph.D, FNP-C, RN, BSN
- An application of the lessons learned approach from the RQFSM model for evaluating health disparities in rural Nevada  
Asma Awan, DrPH. MPH
- Mapping Priorities for Rural Youth Substance Use Prevention  
Janessa Graves, Ph.D, MPH
- Research on social behavioral factors in rural veterans  
Priscah Mujuru, DrPH, MPH, RN
- Bridging Rural Gaps: Mobile Clinics for Behavioral Health  
Rebekah Kaufman, MS
- Care Coordination in a Rural Region: A Qualitative Analysis  
Tiffini Hawkins, MPH
- Navigating Cancer Care: Rural Veterans at the Forefront  
Wade Swenson, MD, MPH, MBA
- Enhancing Rural Oncology Care through Financial Navigation  
Wade Swenson, MD, MPH, MBA
- Community Engagement Approaches in Rural Health Equity Research  
Janessa Graves, PhD, MPH
- Telehealth in Rural Areas: A Feasible Option?  
Analise McGreal, MD
- The Missouri Health Care Workforce Project  
Shirley Murphy, MPH
- Rural Health Community Needs Assessments: Methodological Approaches  
Carmen Culotta, PhD
- Barriers to Rural Veteran Clinical Trial Access  
Emily Westergard, DO
- Increasing Diversity in Cognitive Research: Community-Engaged Approaches  
Monique de Villa, MPH
- Health Care Professional's Perspectives on eSANE for Rural  
Bridget Diamond-Welch, PhD
- Universal School Meals: A Strategy to Improve Rural Health in New Mexico and Beyond  
Olivia Thompson, PhD, MPH
- Improving Access to Hepatitis C Care  
Jean Wiggins, BSPH



- Another Look at Agricultural Rural Food Deserts  
Hamidah Sharif, EdD
- Border Checkpoints and Healthcare Access for Undocumented Immigrants  
Christine Blackburn
- Curing Hepatitis in Rural WV – Access and Equity  
Judith Feinberg, MD
- Bundled intervention serving rural Black women with HIV  
Shawna McNally, MSPH
- Rooting out BIAS in Agricultural Health and Safety  
Knesha Rose-Davison, MPH
- Mental Health Care Disparities Among US Pregnant Individuals  
Julisa Tindall, MSW
- Well-being and Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Exams  
Lindsey Grabowski

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