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Kentucky

Rural Health Update

Rural Health Matters

Submitted by Dr. Brent Wright, President

This year the Kentucky Rural Health Association has been working to step up its game. As an association dedicated to advocacy and education, we are met with ample opportunities to align with interests that have the possibility to make a difference in the lives of those in rural areas. The real challenge involved in this undertaking is focus within an ever changing healthcare environment while maintaining relevant to a diverse membership. In their book, Race for Relevance, Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers discuss the obstacles that many associations face today. At the heart of what they convey to the reader is we have to continually evaluate who we are and who we need to become within the legacy of where we have been.

My joy has been that the KRHA has embraced the charge to grow our association to one with statewide influence for those we serve. Although our journey is not complete, we have made connections

with state leaders who are attentive to our needs and eager to coordinate efforts for greatest effect. The KRHA has reached out to leaders within the cabinet to assist with issues related to workforce, one of the most sustaining issues for rural healthcare. We have aligned efforts with the work of our state Auditor who is examining the impact on rural hospitals within communities throughout our state at a time that is crucial. Two rural hospitals within our state have closed within the last year, a strain that has been witnessed nationwide.

Our rural health association has to deliver on our mission of education and advocacy so that citizens of the Commonwealth do not lose sight of the promise that rural health delivers upon. Our work creates the needs for new members within the association and we have had great outreach to students throughout the state. Along with education of our



mission to students, two new student chapters were accepted recently by our Board of Directors. These two new chapters from Alice Lloyd and Western Kentucky University help to promote the opportunity to a new generation of

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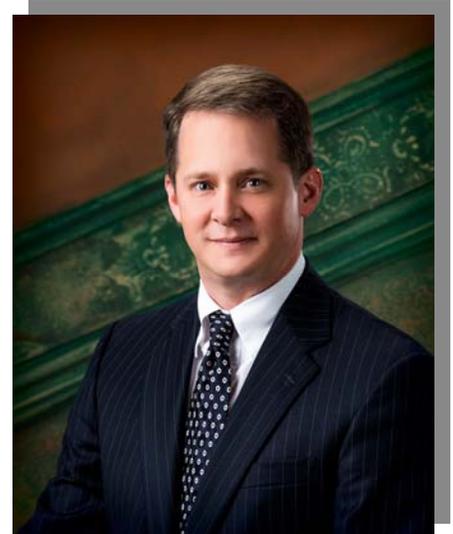


Photo Curtsey of Kentucky Medical Association

Igniting the spark: Lighting the way to health career promotion and recruitment

Submitted by Terri Moore, Purchase AHEC

In this era of technology, our upcoming generations have become accustomed to fast bites, and fast bytes; information at one's fingertips and always being connected. While the more mature of us may suffer from stimulation overload, these well wired youth are often plotting their next move while multitasking. Information is a commanding influence in the human decision making process. Parlay that with firsthand experience, and visual engagement, and it becomes an even more powerful communicator. While there are many factors that will ultimately impact a student's career choice, understanding the options available is a valuable guide in that process.

For the twelfth consecutive year, the Purchase AHEC has been putting this theory to the test by bringing together rising high school freshmen for an introduction to careers in healthcare. Helping students recognize the diversity of career paths available to them is an

important aspect of this event. Students leave with an understanding that a career in healthcare has far more to offer than choosing to become a doctor or nurse – there is something in the industry to fit most any interest, aptitude or skill level.

Over 7,000 students from sixteen area high schools have participated in the Hands-On Health Career Fair since 2003. This daylong event gives participants opportunities to not only see, but to experience what it is like to become a practicing healthcare professional. Students select from the careers represented, and rotate through 20 minute activity stations. Professions through the years have varied, but students traditionally select three of as many as 12 health careers represented each year.

Igniting this spark of interest just might open the door for students to look further into careers that they may have not otherwise considered. When asked about participation in the event,

one high school student that admittedly never considered a health career commented, "I did lots of pretty cool things today...helped remove a gall bladder and tried to use adaptive equipment that helps disabled people. If this is the kind of fun you have in one of these careers, I think I'd enjoy doing something like this."

Secondary, but equally important to the process is the extended training and marketing strategy for the program participants, who are providing the hands-on sessions to the high school students.

Presenters have represented West KY Community and Technical College, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Eastern KY University, as well as programs from Murray State University, which serves as the host agency of the Purchase AHEC.

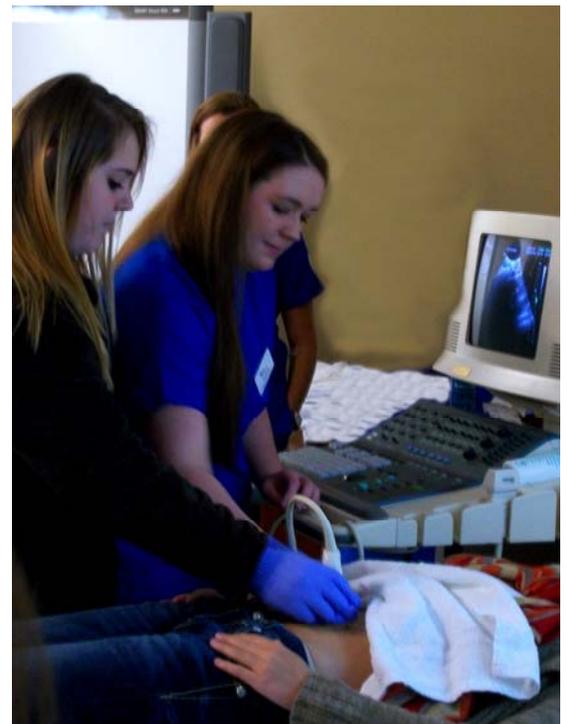
Often, the technical college programs and universities that serve as presenters bring their current students to instruct in the sessions. The younger high school students

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"It is exciting to show what I have learned in physical therapy and share with potential students what I would have liked to have known when I was still in high school"

-Neil Taing, DPT Candidate 2015, UK



News to use from the Kentucky Office of Rural Health

Submitted by Chris Salyers

CMS Offering Free Introductory ICD-10 Workshops

KORH and the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health have partnered with a number of other KRHA members to bring a round of ICD-10 trainings to Western Kentucky in April. As a part of the CMS "Road To 10" initiative, CMS is providing this free training using CMS trainers to target Providers, Coders, and Billers in small practices, particularly in rural areas that don't have large budgets for ICD-10 training.

This 2-hour workshop is designed to give an overview of ICD-10, a breakdown of the new codes, and provide online CMS resources available for the most commonly used codes, broken down by specialty. This workshop isn't intended to replace full training of staff, but to build a solid foundation.

KRHA member Northeast Kentucky Rural Health Information Organization (NeKY RHIO) will be available at each workshop to discuss highly discounted rates for small, rural practices to conduct two-day trainings for ICD-10. CMS has indicated that NeKY RHIO is providing one of the lowest prices for ICD-10 trainings that they have seen.

Scheduled CMS Road To 10 trainings include:

- April 28th 1:30pm – 3:30pm at the Marshall County Health Department in Benton, KY. Sponsored locally by the Purchase Area Health Education Center.
- April 29th 9:00am – 11:00am at Baptist Health Madisonville in Madisonville, KY. Sponsored locally by West



Area Health Education Center and Baptist Health Madisonville.

- April 29th 1:00 pm – 3:00pm at the WKU Health Sciences Complex in Bowling Green, KY. Sponsored locally by the WKU Institute for Rural Health, South Central Area Health Education Center, and the WKU College of Health and Human Services.

More information will be made available through the KORH Weekly Update, and in emails from the local sponsors. KORH and the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health would like to thank the local partners for agreeing to host these CMS workshops to ensure that local practices are afforded this opportunity free of charge. This dedication to collaboration and rural health is just one example of the wonderful things these groups are doing in their region.

2015 Kentucky Rural Health Clinic Summit

The KORH Rural Health Clinic Advisory Board is pleased to announce the upcoming 2015 Kentucky Rural Health Clinic (KRHC) Summit to be held on June 12, 2015 in London, KY. The KRHC Summit is a one-day conference dedicated to educating and addressing barriers specific to Rural Health Clinics in Kentucky. This year's keynote will be a policy update by Bill Finerfrock, Executive Director of the National Association of Rural Health Clinics. Other topics will include: OIG announcements, MCO payment information, PCMH and CHW models, HPSA designation, and more.

More information will be available over the next few weeks in the KORH Weekly Update, as well as emailed directly to those on the KORH distribution list.

New Rural Health Network Being Developed in Madisonville

The KORH has been honored to be part of the development of a new formal health network based in

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Executive Director's Report

Submitted by Tina McCormick



It is a pleasure to serve such a dedicated group as Kentucky Rural Health Association members, partners and sponsors. We have a dedicated group of individuals that serve on the board. Even though these individuals are dedicated to their own professional careers, they still strive to make the Kentucky Rural Health Association better than ever. Our mission to advocate for equitable distribution and access to improved health status for rural Kentuckians is always prominent in their minds as they make the decisions for the future of the association and the members it represents. Continue to watch for some changes that are occurring within the association.

We hope to acquire 501c3 status, which will allow the association to apply for additional grant funding that can assist in moving the association to more involvement in state-wide activities like never before. We are also working on the updating our website to allow us to better serve everyone that visits. The board wants the website to provide clarity

to anyone who visits it. We only have one opportunity to make a first impression and some cases that is the web page.

Our contract with Smoke Free ended December 31. We were able to complete all the required deliverables and then some. I recently attended the Smoke Free Day at the Capitol on February 11, 2015, which again allowed association representation at the Legislative level. We had some members in attendance at that event and it was a good time for some networking with other individuals that have the same goals we have.

Unfortunately, due to weather conditions, the Kentucky Rural Health Association and Kentucky Area Health Education Centers co-sponsored Legislative Conference and Luncheon, which was scheduled for February 19, 2015 had to be canceled.

I am still actively working on the NHSC activities through the contract which will continue through March 2015. It has provided me with opportunities to get out and about the state, not

only to promote this initiative, but the association as well. Since my last report to members, we have acquired additional students from those presentations that I have made promoting NHSC.

In December, we co-sponsored the Office of Health Policy Stakeholder Summit in Frankfort. It proved to be a perfect opportunity to share our mission with some key individuals throughout the state. Since that time, we have been invited to engage in the development of a State Health System Innovation Plan, which will be a twelve-month initiative, assisting us as we continue to work on developing partnerships throughout the state. At this point, we do not know what role we will play in the development of this plan. More

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KRHA's Student Member Update

Submitted by Paula Arnett

It has been an exciting year for KRHA's student membership. Since the kick-off of the Student Conference on Rural Health at the KRHA Annual Conference in September, we now have more than 100 student members and are currently planning the Fall 2015 student event.

Another exciting opportunity that students can take advantage of is joining their local student rural health organization. We have two

new Student Rural Health Associations affiliated with the Kentucky Rural Health Association. Our premier organization was Alice Lloyd College, and they were followed by the Western Kentucky University. As affiliated organizations, members are entitled to participate in KRHA meetings and activities as well as having a vote during the annual membership meeting.

If you or someone that you

know want to become more involved, the KRHA welcomes your application to join as a student member or an affiliated organization. We are looking for students at higher education institutions that have an interest in rural health care issues in Kentucky. If this sounds like you and you want more information, contact Paula Arnett, DrPH at paula.arnett@uky.edu for more information.

hear from someone they can relate to as presenters discuss what is necessary to prepare for admission, what to expect as a practicing professional, and also teach a component of what they have learned to ready them for their chosen career.

Debbie Swain, professor and program coordinator for the West Kentucky Community and Technical College Surgical Technology program has participated in the fair since its inception. "Having my current Surgical Technology students involved in the Hands-On Health Career Fair requires them to teach

what they have learned, and in turn, reinforces their own skills. They truly enjoy seeing the high school students' excitement over the experience they are presenting to them. We have admitted former fair participants in to our program that may not have fully understood what the career entails until meeting us at the event. It's a win-win situation all around."

Advanced health professions students in physical therapy, pharmacy, nutrition and medicine assigned to clinical rotations in the region have often presented to represent the program in which they are enrolled.

Early engagement of high schoolers, using mid-level students

already on the health career path, and connecting training programs to future prospects has resulted in favorable outcomes on every level. The Purchase AHEC Hands-On Health Career Fair will continue this successful model, serving as a potential tipping point to catapult students from curiosity to understanding to future practicing healthcare professionals.

For more information:

Purchase AHEC

225 Wells Hall, Murray State University

Murray, KY 42071

270-809-4119 (direct)

270-809-4123 (main)

270-809-4125 (fax)

Website: www.purchaseahec.org

National Health Service Corps Update

Submitted by Tina McCormick

We started the new year with many activities planned, but it seems that Mother Nature has other ideas. I have been able to reschedule some of the planned events to March to insure we make the necessary contacts and presentations for the NHSC promotion.

During the last update, I mentioned that there had been many discussions about student loans and how students need assistance for them to succeed in the future. So many students are leaving with the degrees they work so hard for, only to have debt that they cannot afford to pay. How can we help? The Kentucky Rural Health Association is working with the National Health Service Corp to promote their Student Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs. What better way can individuals needing assistance with loans or scholarships than the National Health Service Corp program?

And how do Rural

Kentuckians benefit from this program? It's simple; we get to have those providers in our rural areas providing services. My hope is that once the individual works at a rural location for the time specified by the scholarship or loan repayment program that they will be grounded there and make it their home. Some of the students just need a way to come back. NHSC assistance could be just the avenue to assist them. Kentucky was the first in the nation to implement health insurance coverage for all Kentuckians, but we need to keep those providers here to serve the need of those Kentuckians.

We win! Rural Kentucky Wins!

The Kentucky Rural Health Association has contracted with CHS DPH Resource Management Branch to provide educational information individually, group settings and well as other modes educating regarding NHSC. You will see me presenting

at some of the sites and schools. If you would like to request a presentation regarding NHSC, please contact Tina McCormick at (270) 577-1707 or krha@twc.com Each issue of the Rural Health Update will have information for our members:

Some information you can share with your contacts or you might find useful:

1. Scholarships:

The next Scholarship application is scheduled to open in March or April.

You can apply to the Scholarship Program if you are committed to primary care and accepted to or enrolled in a fully accredited training program for

- Physicians (MD or DO)
- Dentists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Certified Nurse-Midwives

More work necessary for a smoke free Kentucky

On behalf of the entire Smoke-Free Kentucky campaign, I'd like to thank the KY Rural Health Association for being a great partner in our effort to make all indoor workplaces in the state smoke-free. While we are disappointed the legislation did not pass this year, we made a valiant effort and significantly elevated the problem of secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace to a new level of importance.

We made history on February 13 when the KY House of Representatives voted on and passed a bill (House Bill 145) that eliminated smoking in many indoor workplaces. KRHA members from all across the state were a big part of that historic progress! While the bill that passed the House (by a vote of 51-46) included some very problematic amendments, we should celebrate the fact that the House Leadership actually held a vote after 4 years of refusing to move any smoke-free legislation because the Senate had promised that it was "dead on arrival."

While we are disheartened that the Senate once again did not see fit to hear HB 145 or SB 189 (a companion bill without major exemptions), we should all be encouraged by the fact that we greatly increased support in the Senate over the years. So much so that the bill would have certainly passed the Senate Health and Welfare committee (which bill sponsor Senator Julie Raque Adams chairs) and possibly the full Senate. Instead, it was assigned to the Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection committee which never considers bills pertaining to public health. This obvious attempt to kill the legislation shows that we have a long way to go to convince members of Senate leadership that

secondhand smoke exposure is a statewide problem that demands a statewide solution.

Before we get too discouraged, it's worth reflecting on how far we've come on this issue. The first statewide smoke-free workplace bill was introduced in 2011 by Representative Susan Westrom who has been our smoke-free champion ever since. At that time, many legislators still did not understand that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard that causes disease and death in non-smokers. A lot of education was needed to convince our elected leaders that there was a problem, let alone that they held the key to the solution.

The following year, a very similar bill passed the House Health and Welfare committee and received international news coverage! In 2013 and 2014, smoke-free legislation passed House H&W again, and a companion bill was introduced in the Senate for the first time ever in 2014.

By 2015, the Smoke-Free Kentucky coalition had grown to include over 500 organizations, representing health, business and community groups from all regions of the state. Smoke-free legislation became a top issue for the General Assembly. Even legislators who were not supportive were no longer denying the science behind the dangers of secondhand smoke. While many said it should remain a local issue, some finally realized that smoking in the workplace is a problem that affects the whole state, even communities with smoke-free laws because of the enormous health care costs of treating non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke as well as smokers. The issue was seen as a "tough vote" not just

because of pressure from opponents of smoke-free, but because of pressure from us! That led to the House finally taking action, albeit not exactly the way we would have wanted.

The fact that smoke-free legislation advanced as far as it did is due largely to the work KRHA and other partners who have helped expand the coalition and the number of individual advocates who are willing to speak up and contact their legislators. We hope you will thank the House members voted for the bill and express your disappointment to your Senators for not even hearing the bill. Also, please take a moment to thank Representative Westrom for her leadership all these years. Susan.Westrom@lrc.ky.gov.

Our goal was never to just pass a law. It was to protect the rights of all Kentuckians to breathe smoke-free air at work and in public places. Since smoking in the workplace affects people in rural Kentucky even more than those in urban areas, you are an important messenger for the issue. While the legislature failed to address the issue, we know we helped pave the way, not just for future statewide efforts, but for comprehensive, evidence-based smoke-free laws at the city and county level. We thank you again for all your support. Let's not quit until we protect everyone in Kentucky from secondhand smoke!



Madisonville, KY to serve the surrounding area. The network members have worked together on a collaborative basis for many years, and are taking the next step in strengthening their partnerships. These unique partners are working to positively impact the health outcomes for their region and train the next generation of a competent health workforce to serve their region.

The member organizations involved include:

- West Area Health Education Center
- Baptist Health Madisonville
- Madisonville Community and Technical College – Allied Health Programs
- Community Health Centers of Western Kentucky
- Health First Community Health Centers
- Caldwell County Community Hospital

Counties that will be served initially by this network include Caldwell, Hopkins, Webster, McLean, Muhlenberg, and Todd. Martha Pleasant and the staff of the West AHEC have graciously agreed to serve the role as Network Director, coordinating the initiatives of the network.

KORH also recognizes the great work being done by other networks they participate in, including Western Kentucky Hospital Network, South Central Hospital Network, Golden Triangle Network, and Project HOME. KORH is available to provide technical assistance to other existing networks, or to groups interested in creating new health networks.

Policy Institute Update

KORH Director Ernie Scott, Flex Director Kayla Combs, and UK CERH Director of Research and Academics Dr. Gretchen Holmes, recently joined over 400 rural health advocates from across the nation at

the 26th annual NRHA Rural Health Policy Institute in Washington DC. The KORH appreciated the opportunity to once again serve as the state contact for the event and the related Hill Visits. In addition to Scott and Combs, the Kentucky delegation for Hill Visits was comprised of Elizabeth Cobb, Susie

Starling, Neal Gold and Alison Davis. Although the delegation was smaller in size than in years past, recent communication with congressional offices indicate the group left a remarkable impression. Please make plans to attend the 2016 NRHA Rural Health Policy



If you're interested in receiving regular updates from KORH or getting The Bridge delivered directly to your inbox, you can sign up for one of our many distribution lists through the Constant Contact sign-up form on the KORH Facebook page, or by emailing chris.salyers@uky.edu

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details to follow!

We recently acquired U of L as not only a Platinum Sponsor, but an involved partner. They have been working closely with Dr. Wright and me to promote Kentucky Rural Health Association and our mission.

The conference planning committee is meeting no less than 1 time per month to insure that the conference this year is better than ever. The conference will be in Bowling Green again this year at the WKU Knicely Center. Ernie Scott is the chair of the committee and we will be sharing details soon!

I am still working to obtain new sponsorships, memberships, and involvements. Each partner we gain gives us another opportunity to be seen as the association that makes a difference in the lives of Rural Kentuckians.

As members, I want to insure that all your needs are met, please let me know if you need assistance. If you have an activity that you think that we should be present, please share that with me and I'll be sure we are represented.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you need assistance. You can reach me by phone (270) 577-1707 or email: krha@twc.com

•Physician Assistants

The scholarship pays **tuition, fees, other educational costs, and provides a living stipend** in return for a **commitment to work at least 2 years** at an approved outpatient facility in a medically underserved community.

The scholarship can be awarded for as many as 4 years. With each year (or partial year) of support beyond the first year, the student agrees to provide one additional year of service, with a maximum of four years.

Service begins upon graduation (and completion of primary care residency training for doctors and dentists). The NHSC helps scholars find a practice site that's right for them among the hundreds of NHSC-approved sites in medically underserved urban, rural and frontier communities across the U.S. When in service, scholars earn a market-rate salary, paid by the employing facility.

Scholarship payments other than the living stipend are federal income tax-free.

The Scholarship Program accepts applications once each year. Applicants chosen to receive the scholarship are notified no later than September 30.

2. Steps to become a NHSC approved site:

Determine if Your Facility is in a HPSA Your facility must be located in a Federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

Check Other Eligibility Requirements Confirm that your site meets all of the eligibility requirements.

Review the NHSC Site Reference Guide This document provides

important program detail you should understand before applying.

Get Questions Answered Contact your local PCO before starting your application to make sure your site qualifies and to determine your HPSA designation. Your PCO will review your application once it is submitted. You may also contact the NHSC Customer Care Center at 1-800-221-9393 or email GetHelp@hrsa.gov for additional assistance.

Create an Account to Apply Online Create an account with the NHSC, which will allow you to apply online to become an NHSC-approved site.

Gather Required Documentation Compile the required documentation to submit with your application.

-Policies on Non-Discrimination. Submit a copy of the site's policies on non-discrimination of patients based upon race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, or sexual orientation, as per the NHSC Site Agreement.

-Sliding Fee Schedule Documents. Submit documentation (see list below) of the site's sliding fee schedule (SFS).

- Discounted Fee Schedule/SFS
- Patient Application for SFS
- Site's Policy on the SFS

-Required Signage. Submit a photograph or copy of posted signage that meets the requirements of the NHSC Site Agreement.

-Proof of Access to Ancillary, Inpatient and Specialty Care. Attach proof of referral arrangements for ancillary, inpatient, and specialty care.

-NHSC Site Data Tables. Attach the completed with information on the

individual site location.

Apply Online

Log in to complete the online application. If an organization has multiple sites located in HPSAs and would like all sites (e.g., satellite site, mobile unit, etc.) to be NHSC-approved, each location must submit a separate Site Application and be approved individually.

For Solo and Private Practitioners Please note that private practices may require a site visit before the application review is completed.

Learn About the Approval Process Applications are generally processed within 6 to 8 weeks, however, some may take longer due to application volume, pre-approval site visit requirements, and the quality of submitted information.



Rural Health Matters from page 2

leaders for our state.

I want to thank our members and leaders for their support throughout this year and ask you to hold on as we continue our work in maximizing our relevance. It is not too early to make plans for our annual meeting this September in Bowling Green. And as always, if you have ideas on how the KRHA can be more meaningful, relevant, and impactful for the healthcare needs of rural Kentuckians, please do not hesitate to call, write, or text. Rural health matters, and your voice makes it so.