
Rural Health Coordinating Committee Report



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Over the past year, we have discussed the following issues:

Office of Rural Health on Facebook

Office of Rural Health has a Facebook page, discussed benefits of social communication, in particular as a recruitment tool. Will not replace newsletter and usual communications.

Apple-A-Day Fundraiser

Apple-A-Day fundraiser for EMT training. Last year's fundraiser was a success, with \$3,900 distributed to rural EMT entities to help with training costs.

Rural Health Conference

The 27th Annual Rural Health Conference was held on September 23-25 in Salem. Mary Ann Carr, FNP, of the Alsea Rural Health Clinic, was the opening speaker. The agenda focused on the future of primary care and the impact of federal legislation on the provision of health services.

Rural Health Clinic Report 2010

The Rural Health Clinic Report 2010 is being conducted. It's a study of what's happening in the 60 RHC's in the state. This year, ORH is teaming up with Oregon Community Health Information Network to produce the report.

Legislative Lobbying

The Office of Rural Health is mandated by statute to lobby state on behalf of rural health. Next legislative session ORH will be working on more resources to sustain the agency, partnering with the Oregon Rural Health Association to get legislation. They will be supporting the Oregon Academy of Family Physicians' recommendations regarding workforce issues, i.e. medical malpractice program, loan repayment, residency slots, etc.

Rural Health Policy Summit

The Rural Health Policy Summit, hosted by Oregon Rural Health Association, was held in June. Attended by six State Representatives, some legislative staff, and other interested parties. All members of the House and Senate were invited. John Kitzhaber was a speaker at lunch. Chris Dudley sent a staffer. OAFP workforce package was introduced. This will be promoted by ORHA and supported by ORH. I spoke about barriers to access to mental health in rural Oregon. ORHA will host another in two years.

EMS Mobile Training Units

One EMS Mobile Training Unit (MTU) has been retained, thanks to efforts of many who sent letters to the Governor's office voicing concern. With announced budget cuts, both units were at risk of closure. ORHA, RHCC, ORH, some AHEC's, and many individuals sent letters. Over 2500 phone calls, emails and letters received. State EMS office was instructed to continue funding the single unit through this fiscal year. MTU's allow for mobile EMS training. Most EMS providers in rural Oregon are volunteers, and train at their own expense.

Testimony About Barriers to Mental Health Care Access in Rural Oregon

On September 22, I gave testimony to the House Human Services Committee about the barriers to mental health care access in rural Oregon. Thanks to NP's who responded to my requests for their testimony. I submitted their e-mails along with narrative of my testimony. One of the representatives was experiencing an acute mental health issue with a loved one, and the message was well-received. Dr. Lisa Dodson from OHSU spoke to some of the legislative actions that can be taken to improve access to care, mostly regarding increased funding for loan repayment programs, training of providers, and telepsychiatry.