

2005 Rural Conference in Sunriver

The 22nd Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference, sponsored by the Oregon Office of Rural Health, OHSU's Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network and Oregon Area Health Education Centers, took place November 3 – 5, 2005 at the Sunriver Resort in Sunriver, Oregon.

"Rural Oregon's Heartbeat – Living the Challenge" featured presentations on the challenges facing rural Oregon communities in obtaining health care in today's environment.

Jo Johnson, Recruitment Services Coordinator at the Office of Rural Health,

presented a *Recruitment Workshop* offering guidance in preparing for successful recruitment and retention of health care providers. Participants received ideas on how to make their practice opportunities competitive to practitioners searching for the ideal rural location to work and live.

A meeting of the Rural Healthcare Quality Network featured an expert on quality improvement for rural hospitals. Terry J. Hill, M.P.A., Executive Director of the Rural Health Resource Center in Duluth, Minnesota, spoke on the balanced scorecard approach to continuous quality improvement and how it can be applied to rural healthcare.

The concurrent sessions in the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network

(ORPRN) track concentrated on best practices research and improving patient outcomes in rural communities. One of the most popular sessions, *ORPRN Completed Research and Research in Process*,

discussed ORPRN's rural health research mission.

The Friday Welcome Reception honored retiring Vice Provost and Director of the Center of Rural Health, Karen Whitaker Knapp. During an open comment period, those working in rural health expressed their sadness at Knapp's departure after 15

years of leading OHSU's outreach mission to bring access to quality healthcare for rural Oregonians. Knapp was also honored by the Oregon Rural Health Association for her dedication to the Association.

That same evening the recipients of the *Oregon Rural Conference Awards* were honored. The *Pine Eagle Clinic* in Pine Valley received the *Outstanding Rural Health Practice* award. The Pine Eagle clinic was established in 1977 and meets the needs of eighty percent of the population in the area, including a large number of elderly patients who would not otherwise have ready access to medical care.

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Snow at Sunriver, 2005

Health Care Ethics Resources

Over the past three months, the OHSU Center for Ethics in Health Care has hosted regional palliative care and ethics conferences in Medford, Salem, LaGrande, and Eugene. As part of a four-year grant from **The Kinsman Foundation** to strengthen and develop palliative care programs throughout Oregon, the Center hosts annual regional and statewide conferences, and also provides direct consultation to organizations seeking to establish or expand current programs. Some conference themes include pain and symptom management, hospital-hospice partnerships, politics of artificial nutrition and hydration, ethical issues at the end of life, palliative care program development, communication, and professionalism. "These conferences provide a way for ideas found effective in one region to be shared with other regions," says Center Director Dr. Susan Tolle.

Looking ahead, the 16th Annual Statewide Kinsman Health Care Ethics Conference will be held April 20-21, 2006, at St. Charles Medical Center, in Bend. Keynote speaker Dr. Matt Wynia, Director of the Institute for Ethics at the American Medical Association, will lead discussions on communication, professionalism, and ethics challenges in the future.

Also, the 2006 Statewide Inpatient Palliative Care Conference will be held Friday, June 16, 2006, at the Kingstad Meeting Center, in Beaverton. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Charles von Gunten, Director of the Center for Palliative Studies at San Diego Hospice & Palliative Care, and Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Palliative Medicine*. These statewide conferences offer an excellent opportunity to network with other colleagues, learn about local and national developments in health care ethics, and earn continuing education credit for most healthcare

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Mary Ann Carr, NP, of the Alsea Rural Health Clinic was honored as the *Rural Health Practitioner of the Year*. Carr has been with the clinic for 24 years and in that time has provided excellent care for her patients, mentored health care students and led the effort to construct a new building for the clinic.

The award for *Outstanding Contribution to Rural Health in Oregon* went to Lynne Matuk, RN. Matuk, with help from her mother, established the now thriving Chiloquin Rural Health Clinic. While providing quality care for the area's residents who would otherwise not have access, Matuk is also a paramedic, a part time student pursuing her BSN and a single mom. Matuk shared the award with her mother for helping to bring low-cost subsidized health care to an area which serves about 8,000 in a 1,100 square mile service area.

The Rinehart Clinic's Charlene Toninato was the recipient of the *Outstanding Clinic Administrator, Manager or Staff* award. The award emphasized Toninato's irreplaceable value to the operations of the clinic. With hard work and persistence, she was able to turn around the financially troubled clinic.

The Dutch Reinschmidt Award for *Outstanding Achievement in Rural Health Education* was given to Dr. Peter Kohler, President, Oregon Health & Science University for his persistent promotion of rural health throughout the state and within the University. Dr. Kohler has maintained his dedication to assuring healthcare for rural communities for the last 17 years.

Karen Whitaker Knapp presented Lesley Hallick, PhD, Provost, Oregon Health & Science University, a special award of gratitude and appreciation for her unflinching, persistent and fearless support of the Office of Rural Health and rural Oregonians.



Bill Sexton, Chief Executive Providence Seaside Hospital, presents "The Rural Landscape" at Saturday's lunch.

Scott Ekblad, Director, by phone at 503-494-4450 or by email at ekblads@ohsu.edu.

This annual gathering of rural healthcare providers, administrators, researchers and advocates provides a unique opportunity for networking and an exchange of ideas that can be hindered by distance during the rest of the year. We look forward to hosting the next annual Rural Health Conference, November 2 – 4, 2006 in Newport Oregon.

For more information, visit the Office of Rural Health web site, www.ohsu.edu/oregonruralhealth, or contact

ORH Starts The New Year With New Staff

The Office of Rural Health invites you to join us in welcoming our newest staff members. All staff can be reached via the department phone at 503-494-4450 and through individual email. Information about each staff person is also available on our web site www.ohsu.edu/oregonruralhealth.



Kassie Clarke - Community Grants Coordinator

Kassie is the new Community Grants Coordinator, replacing Sandra Assasnik. Her varied experience includes managing public contracts with the state of Oregon and working to establish school-based dental sealant programs. Kassie will be

working with the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (FLEX) program, and the State Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP). She may be contacted at clarkek@ohsu.edu.



Claire Tranchese - Technical Assistance Field Specialist

Claire has been at OHSU for six years, working most recently for the statewide Community Connections Network Program. Having grown up in a small town in upstate New York, she is familiar with some of the advantages and disadvantages of

rural living. Three years of working with communities around Oregon has taught her a lot about what dedication and collaboration can do for community health services. She is now ready to play a larger role in helping rural Oregon communities further develop and improve their health systems. Claire is available at tranches@ohsu.edu.



The Office of Rural Health staff would also like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to Karen Whitaker Knapp, Vice Provost and Director for the Center of Rural Health. Karen has been with OHSU for 15 years and will retire at the end of March, 2006. The staff will miss her leadership, sense of humor and dedication to the field of rural health.

We wish her much happiness in the next chapter of her life.

Rural Healthcare Quality Network Exceeds Expectations

Formalized only seven months ago, the Oregon Rural Healthcare Quality Network (RHQN) is well underway already. “It’s more than we hoped for,” says Scott Ekblad, Director of the Office of Rural Health. “The RHQN is one of the most exciting projects to come out of our office in a long time!”

Early in 2005, the RHQN received a one-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) planning grant. Network members from among the state’s Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) and other stakeholders organized quickly and turned the grant into a scope of work, hiring its first administrator in May. Since then, the group has checked off a significant list of action items that it set out for itself. Included among these items were:

- Determine the needs of Critical Access Hospitals
- Develop communication materials
- Collectively identify a joint project

Key objectives were clarified by July, and in August the RHQN met face-to-face with most of Oregon’s CAH Administrators to discuss their most critical needs. It is clear that, as one CEO put it, “When you’ve seen one CAH, you’ve seen one CAH!” No two hospitals are alike. Yet despite the diversity among these 23 hospitals, there are also many shared needs. Several of the most significant needs faced by our CAHs are also key RHQN objectives:

- Creation of rural Oregon hospital data that is meaningful and credible.
- Enhanced quality improvement processes.
- Rural-appropriate best practices and protocols readily available.
- Peer learning opportunities – in-person and via threaded conversation on-line.
- A meaningful and affordable external peer review process.

As a result of these meetings, the development of a meaningful external peer review process was selected to become the first RHQN joint project. A model process was located in Colorado that is now being “Oregonized” – or adapted to meet our needs here in Oregon. The RHQN expects to pilot this process by Spring 2006.

RHQN members have convened from all over the state every month since its inception. “It’s worth the drive,” says founding member Patti Baker, Quality Compliance Officer, Lake District Hospital in Lakeview. “I learn something new at every meeting and I know what we’re creating will pay off in volumes for our

hospital.” “This initiative is essential to the long-term stability of our Critical Access Hospitals,” adds Bill Sexton, CEO of Providence Seaside. “Transparency issues and Medicare changes are coming down on us fast. Many of our CAHs will have real difficulty weathering this storm if we don’t all get in the boat together.”

And, in fact, many of the CAHs are getting into the boat – even offering financial support to keep the momentum going. “We’ve had a wonderful show of support,” says Linda Lang, RHQN Project Manager. “It’s really encouraging to see so many CEOs stepping up to ensure that the RHQN makes it through these first few years. It’s clear that we’re in it for the long-run — and we’re in it together!”

2005 Rural Practitioner Tax Credit

Applications and renewals for the rural practitioner state income tax credit will be mailed the second week of December to practitioner home addresses. Practitioners who were eligible for the tax credit in 2004 will automatically receive a 2005 renewal.

Oregon’s rural practitioner state income tax credit is authorized by Oregon Revised Statutes 316.143 and implemented through Oregon Administrative rules 572-090-030. The Office of Rural Health at Oregon Health & Science University is charged with administering this program, which grants up to \$5,000 in personal income tax credits to any eligible MD, DO, DPM, NP, PA, CRNA, OD, DDS or DMD.

View eligibility guidelines on the Office of Rural Health web site, www.ohsu.edu/oregonruralhealth. If you have any questions about the tax credit, please contact Linda Pepler toll free at 866-674-4376 or by email at peplerl@ohsu.edu.

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professionals. For more information about 2006 conference offerings from the Center for Ethics, check the Center for Rural Health website regularly.

The Center for Ethics recently updated the Physician-Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment website, www.POLST.org. The website now features extensive information about the POLST program, including teaching modules ideal for nursing home staff education, and lay educational resources such as brochures (English and Spanish) and streaming videos.

TRAINING & CONFERENCE INFO

January 19, 2006

Rural Health Coordinating Council Meeting
Portland Marriott at the Airport, Portland, Oregon
Office of Rural Health
Caleb Minnieweather, minniewc@ohsu.edu or call (503) 494-4450

January 18, 2006

Promoting Quality Improvement in Rural Areas
First of Three Part Teleconference
National Rural Health Association
Rosemary McKenzie, RMcKenzie@NRHArural.org, or call (816) 756-3140

February 27 - March 1, 2006

Rural Health Policy Institute
Grandy Hyatt, Washington D.C.
National Rural Health Association
Rosemary McKenzie, RMcKenzie@NRHArural.org, or call (816) 756-3140

**The Office of Rural Health
would like to hear from you!**

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